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THE POEMS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH IN 1798

FROM A CHALK DRAWING BY ROBERT HANCOCK IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

THE POEMS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES BY

NOWELL CHARLES SMITH, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, AND FORMERLY
FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I

WITH A FRONTISPIECE



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TO THE PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS
OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD
WHO BY ELECTING ME TO THEIR SOCIETY
ENABLED ME TO UNDERTAKE THIS EDITION
I DEDICATE THESE BELATED FRUITS OF
MUCH PLEASANT LABOUR

PREFACE

THE activity of the modern book-market is so great that no apology seems to be necessary for adding one to the large number of editions of Wordsworth already in existence. A short explanation of the scope of the present edition is, however, desirable. It is, as far as I know, the first complete edition of the poetry which has attempted to supply, within moderate compass, answers to such questions as the text may naturally raise in the reader's mind. The other modern English editions, apart from mere reprints, are those of Professor William Knight, of Professor Dowden, and of Mr. Hutchinson. Students of Wordsworth must always acknowledge the abundance of material which Professor Knight collected for the elucidation of Wordsworth's life and thought, the history of his text, the topography of his poems and their allusions, and I for my part am cordially grateful to him for the kind words with which he gave me permission, so far as it rested with him, to make use of matter published for the first time by himself; and my notes will show how far I am indebted to his editorial labours, as well as to the *Life* which fills vols. ix., x., xi. of his Edinburgh edition. The distinctive feature of his edition, which should have made it final for textual purposes, was the exhibition, on the same page as the text, of *all* the various readings adopted by Wordsworth in the many editions of his own lifetime—not to mention a large number, rescued from MS., which never saw the light. I am forced to say 'should have made it final,' for unfortunately there are so many errors of one kind and another even in the later of Professor Knight's two editions,

that no student can venture to take anything in it on trust. A few of these errors I have mentioned in my notes, others I have corrected silently, either from my own observation or from the searching and severe criticisms of Mr. Hutchinson in the *Academy* (vol. l., 1896), and other sources. To any one accustomed to the accuracy of modern standard editions of Latin and Greek classics, the inaccuracy and the diffuseness of too many editions of English classics is so irritating that one fears to become unjust, and to forget the enthusiasm and the desire to spread light and happiness which alone could enable a man to carry through so laborious, and, from the material point of view, so unremunerative a task as an annotated edition of a voluminous poet. But, apart from this question of accuracy, my edition does not aim at the exhaustiveness of Professor Knight's. I have not consciously left any difficulty without an attempt to remove it, or the confession that I cannot do so; and I have given a considerable number of various readings, where they throw light upon Wordsworth's art or have some other special interest, as well as such illustrative notes and quotations from other writers as I thought too valuable or too interesting to omit. But I have studied compression throughout, and have written more for the ordinary reader or the comparatively inexperienced student than for the expert in Wordsworthian or other English literature. Of the other two editors mentioned above, Professor Dowden gives a very copious selection of various readings and many valuable chronological notes, Mr. Hutchinson only a very few, though admirable, notes, together with the results of his unequalled knowledge of Wordsworthian chronology in the dates prefixed to the poems. Both are models of accuracy, but neither aims at giving the same sort of assistance which this edition attempts.

I cannot speak too warmly of my gratitude to Mr. Hutchinson for his sympathy and helpfulness. His published work on Wordsworth makes him *facile princeps* in Wordsworthian historical criticism, *i.e.* in knowledge of the text, of the

chronology, of the contemporary criticism of the poet, and of the poet's own methods and phases in his art. But besides making use of his published work, I have frequently beset Mr. Hutchinson with epistolary inquiries, and never without most generous and valuable results. My thanks are also due to Mr. R. A. Potts for kindly supplying me with the sources of some quotations; to Mr. T. Norton Longman for his courtesy in allowing me to print, for the first time in a complete edition of Wordsworth's poetry, the doggerel but spirited verses called *The Tinker*, as well as some copyright matter which first appeared in Professor Knight's edition; to Mr. Gordon G. Wordsworth, the poet's grandson, for his kind consent with Professor Knight to my printing verses first published by the latter; and to all friends who have answered or attempted to answer questions which I have put to them. Finally, to my wife I owe gratitude for much tedious clerical work, and to my sister, Miss Janet Horace Smith, for the task, perhaps even more trying, of reading the proofs of the whole text. As I have also, as well as the printer's reader, read all the proofs with care, I hope (especially in view of my previous strictures!) that I shall be found to have kept 'within the margin of inevitable error.'

My text is that of the last edition of Wordsworth's lifetime, published by Moxon, 6 vols. 12mo, 1849-50, for all the poems which that edition contains. In the very rare cases where I have departed from that text, even in punctuation, except in the most trivial displacement of commas, I have called attention to the fact in a note. The *Prelude* rests upon two editions, both posthumous, of 1850 and 1857; these are identical except for a few variations in punctuation and one curious variation of text (Book III. ll. 104 foll.). The original versions of *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* I have printed from Mr. Hutchinson's reprint in the *Oxford Wordsworth*. The other poems not appearing in the edition of 1849-50, except *The Tinker*, I have printed from Mr. Hutchinson's and Professor Knight's texts, comparing, wherever it was

possible, their texts with the sources from which they were derived. I have not been able to print *The Recluse*, the copyright of which belongs to Messrs. Macmillan.

I have adopted Wordsworth's own arrangement of his poems—a course which is to my mind quite conclusively vindicated in Professor Dowden's preface to the Aldine edition. Wordsworth's classification is perhaps pedantic, certainly only half-scientific, often irritating and confusing to the memory. But it is, in the main, characteristic, a not unimportant element in the complex of his art and thought. The only other possible arrangement would be the chronological. This is the right one for such an edition as Professor Knight's, which proposes primarily to give a full critical apparatus, but not for an edition which aims first of all at giving the reader Wordsworth's poems as he wished them to be read. Moreover, the chronological order is impossible to be given completely. Many of the poems are undated, and almost certain to remain so; to many Wordsworth accidentally gave dates that are demonstrably wrong. In appending dates to the poems I have made the best use that I could of the materials gradually collected by Wordsworthian critics, particularly the three editors already mentioned; and I have added a Chronological Index for the convenience of students.

The Introduction is the same as I published in a volume of *Selections from Wordsworth* (1901), with some additions and small alterations. I would gladly have made the additions more, but the book is bulky enough already; Mr. D. W. Rannie's *Wordsworth and his Circle*, published within the last few months (Methuen, 1907), is itself a more detailed introduction to the poems, containing much thoughtful and sympathetic criticism; and although I hope for other opportunities of helping to start others on the enjoyment of a poet who has been one of my chief sources of strength, delight, and consolation, my main purpose here is to present an accurate text with such elucidations as are necessary. To have merely rewritten what I wrote in 1901 would have been insincere;

and I had the less temptation to do so because it met with the approval of some very good judges.

Finally I must apologise to some of those and to others who may be aware how long this edition has been announced. I have indeed made use of the delay, which, as far as I am concerned, was unavoidable, to add such information as I could from time to time; and I hope I have kept abreast of Wordsworthian criticism. But I cannot help fearing that the period of incubation may suggest the mountain in labour, and may have aroused expectations of novelty or of quantity of illustrative matter which it was never part of my purpose to offer. My hope is that any one reading Wordsworth in this edition will find himself adequately equipped for the intelligent study of the poet. For more minute study, and for further assistance in questions of biography and in appreciation of Wordsworth's poetry, besides the editions already mentioned, the following books may be specially recommended:—Mr. Hutchinson's edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (Duckworth, 1898), and his edition of the *Poems in Two Volumes* (Nutt, 1897), *La Jeunesse de W. Wordsworth*, by Professor E. Legouis (Paris, Masson, 1896; translation by A. Matthews, Dent, 1897); F. W. H. Myers' *Wordsworth* in the 'English Men of Letters' series (Macmillan, 1880); Professor Walter Raleigh's *Wordsworth* (Arnold, 1903); Leslie Stephen's article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; Matthew Arnold's Introduction to his *Select Poems of Wordsworth* (Macmillan, 'Golden Treasury' series). The list might be almost indefinitely lengthened; a full bibliography up to the dates of their respective publications will be found in Professor Knight's Eversley edition, and in a useful *Wordsworth Primer* by Mr. Laurie Magnus (Methuen, 1897).

N. C. S.

WINCHESTER, *January* 1908

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NOTE

The Frontispiece to this Volume represents Wordsworth at the age of twenty-eight, from a drawing in black chalk by Robert Hancock in the National Portrait Gallery. It is reproduced from a photograph by Messrs. Walker and Cockerell.

INTRODUCTION

WORDSWORTH'S life, even for that of a poet, was singularly devoid of romantic or uncommon incidents; and yet no poet has been more constantly inspired by his immediate surroundings or even more minutely autobiographical. The second of these two facts renders a long descriptive account of his life unnecessary; the first would make it tedious unless treated with that fullness of detail and of first-hand evidence, which is beyond the scope of an *Introduction*, but which alone could make the familiar matter of a quiet life live again before the mind's eye. As the Solitary says—

> What special record can, or need, be given
> To rules and habits, whereby much was done,
> But all within the sphere of little things;
> Of humble, though, to us, important cares,
> And precious interests?[1]

But, illuminated by the intense glow of the poet's imagination, the very ordinariness of his lot is one of the surest charms to draw and hold his readers. Some poets move almost wholly among supersensible abstractions, whither they are not able to lift more earthly natures. Others are roused only by the strange, the violent, the terrible, the lawless, elements or possibilities of human life; and their spell is like their inspiration, potent but not abiding. In others the senses are like the strings of an Æolian lute, trembling into melody at each touch of the wandering breezes, but uncontrolled by the will of a conscious minstrel: we listen

[1] *Excursion*, Book iii. 607.

awhile to the witching sounds, but soon we tire of them—or become enervated. Each of these three kinds of poet, and many another kind, appeals to certain desires or tendencies of human nature. But not many men are capable of maintaining a lively interest in abstractions or purely spiritual beings; most men, sufficiently educated to care for poetry, become easily tired of the merely abnormal or unfamiliar, of witches, brigands, Peris, poison, scimitars, and Vengeance; men whose blood is not as thin as water are often minded, like Ulysses, to stop their ears against mere Sirens' voices. That poet is surest of a place in 'the general heart of man,' whose imagination is the interpreter, not of the remote, but of the near, of 'familiar matter of to-day' and every day; who, by his clearer vision and readier utterance, vivifies the emotions which the sights and sounds and manifold experience of life awaken in most of us in a vague unsettled way, and while he hears and repeats 'the still, sad music of humanity,' still joys himself, and strengthens us, in that

> sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

It is to this class of poets that Wordsworth belongs. He is not the poet of the lover particularly, or of the poet, or of the student, or of the young, or the adventurous, or the hypochondriacal, or of any one type of man, particularly. He is the poet of the more widespread characteristics of humanity; of strong personal interests and affections; of sensibility, almost universal though commonly inarticulate, to the influences of natural objects, brooks and trees, mountain and field, earth and sky, air and light; of an emotional rather than speculative desire to read the riddle of the universe, controlled by the dictates of the practical reason and an in-

stinctive grasp of the reality of duty; finally, of the not uncheerful seriousness which is the outcome of these qualities.

Thus Wordsworth is one of the most universal of our poets; not because he takes 'all knowledge for his province,' for his range has not the variety of a student like Browning; nor because of dramatic power, for few poets have had less of the dramatist; but just because of the sincerity and truth with which he declares to us that which he has seen and known, and because it is that in the main which we, without special experience of abstruse study, distant travel, strange adventures, eccentric imaginations, can 'to the measure of the light vouchsafed' see and know for ourselves.

Wordsworth's poetic material, then, lay close at hand. His poems form his life, and from them we get a far more intimate picture of the man than a detailed narrative could give us. He has, moreover, fully and faithfully recorded his history during the first thirty-five years of his life (the most important years for a biography) in *The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind;* a poem for unity of purpose, right perspective, essential truthfulness, unique in the age of confidences which was ushered in by the *Confessions* of Rousseau.[1]

[1] It may be added, in passing, that *The Prelude* rises from time to time to the very heights of inspired verse: cp. Book i. ll. 401 foll: 'Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe! . . .' ii. 396: 'Thus while the days flew by, and years passed on . . .' iv. 142: 'The sun was set, or setting, when I left . . .' Some people may be inclined to distrust a grown man's reminiscences of the *minutiæ* of his early childhood. Women will be less sceptical, perhaps, than men, as they usually retain more vivid and minute impressions of early days. But Wordsworth from his youth trained his memory, partly by close attention to his observations and emotions at the time when he experienced them, partly by constant brooding over the recollection of them. Professor Raleigh, in his recent study of Wordsworth (1903), pp. 25-28, has some excellent remarks on this subject: among others this:—'He indulged his memory with long periods of reverie, set it to travel to and fro among the past experiences of his life, and loved solitude and indolence chiefly because during the lulls of social intercourse and intellectual labour lost impressions were recaptured.' Wordsworth's poems, and his notes, dictated late in life to Miss Fenwick, amply attest the power of his memory for anything that had affected his emotions: for mere dates, as his editors know to their cost, he had no memory; he gave dates to his poems in the edition of 1815 and subsequently, but the dates are frequently proved to be wrong by unimpeachable evidence.

Guided, therefore, by the poet himself, and adding the merest outline of dates and names, we may present such a short sketch of Wordsworth's life as will serve as an introduction to his poems for those who are unfamiliar with the subject.

He was born on April 7, 1770, in the year of Chatterton's death and of the publication of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, the year before the death of Gray. Scott, Coleridge, Southey, Lamb, Landor, Campbell, Hazlitt, Moore, De Quincey, were all born in the next fifteen years; Byron and Shelley, Keats and Carlyle, within another decade.

Wordsworth's father, John Wordsworth, of Yorkshire descent, was an attorney at Cockermouth, and agent to Sir James Lowther, the first Lord Lonsdale; his mother was daughter of William Cookson, mercer, of Penrith, and of Dorothy Crackanthorp: from these two grandparents the two most gifted of John Wordsworth's children, the two to be inseparably linked in life and fame, were named; William being the second child and Dorothy the third.

The Derwent, which flowed, as Wordsworth tells us,[1]

> Along the margin of our terrace walk,

was one of the first and fairest of the influences that formed the poet's soul, with its

> ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
> To more than infant softness, giving me
> Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
> A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
> That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.[2]

Thus—

> Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
> Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:[3]

and both in the passage from which these lines are taken,

[1] *Prelude*, i. 286. [2] *Ibid.* 277. [3] *Ibid.* 301.

by implication, and in the Fifth Book of the same poem, directly, Wordsworth pays tribute to the mother, her

> who was the heart
> And hinge of all our learnings and our loves,[1]

to whose wise simple-mindedness he owed the free range of his childish days among the sights and sounds, fancies and fairy tales, that nourished his imaginative sympathy with nature.

His mother died in 1778, his father in 1783. The greater part of his boyhood was spent in the 'belovèd Vale' of Esthwaite, near Windermere, where he was a pupil at the old grammar-school of Hawkshead,[2] living the while in the cottage of Anne Tyson, 'my old Dame, so kind and motherly,' whose memory he affectionately celebrates in *The Prelude*.[3]

All this period Wordsworth has brought before us with a loving carefulness and a zest that give the first two books of *The Prelude* a charm and freshness beyond the rest. And these two books deserve to stand out most clearly; for not only was the most celebrated of Wordsworth's poems, along with many others in their varying degrees, inspired by 'recollections of childhood'; not only was childhood always a subject of the deepest interest to him; but in his case, if ever, it was true that 'the child is father of the man'; it was in these impressionable early years that his 'fostering' surroundings, and, above all, the mystery of mountains, endowed him with that strong hold on the actual, and that equally strong mysticism, which together make up the very fabric of his poetry.

One passage, though of little effect compared with the whole of the two books, will illustrate this far better than pages of analysis and comment:—

[1] *Prelude*, v. 257.
[2] See the 'Matthew' poems, vol ii. pp. 337 foll.
[3] iv. 25 foll.

One summer evening (led by her[1]) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood; but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

[1] *i.e.* Nature: i. 357 foll.

Wordsworth spoke more than once in later years of the vividness, the over-mastering power, of the spiritual experiences of his boyhood. 'I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality.'[1]

But with all this he was neither an infant prodigy nor a morbid or solitary child. The simplicity of his social surroundings and his out-of-doors life co-operated with his strong limbs and vigorous nature to keep him unspoilt. He describes his delight in skating and adventurous climbing, his birds'-nesting and nutting expeditions, his riding and rowing. Just as in later life he was a man of strong common sense and shrewdness as well as a 'dedicated spirit,' so in his school-days he was a boy among his fellows as well as a dreamer of dreams.

At the age of seventeen, he was sent by his two uncles and guardians, Richard Wordsworth and Christopher Crackanthorp, to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he resided during the usual three years, taking his degree in January 1791. His university career was in no way conspicuous. Duty to his benefactors, as well as his own common sense, prevented him from rebelling against a good deal that was uncongenial to him; the plunge into a busier, gayer society—if engaged mainly upon 'strenuous idleness'[2]—afforded him

[1] Fenwick note to *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.*

[2] *Prelude*, iv. 378. The phrase is repeated in the poem, 'This Lawn, a carpet all alive,' composed 1829. See vol. ii. p. 363.

much enjoyment and some youthful dissatisfaction. In after years, as his strong feeling for the past became developed, he felt a certain regret at the rather slight hold that an ancient university had taken of his imagination. Poets have rarely been quite at home at Oxford or Cambridge, where the standard of the mean asserts itself with tyrannous excess. Wordsworth, though his fancy could picture a place of learning,—such as, fortunately for his genius, did not exist,—

> Whose studious aspect should have bent me down
> To instantaneous service,[1]

was free from the censorious self-complacency of more vulgar minds. 'Nor was this,' he says,—namely, the lack of a 'high emotion,'—

> Nor was this the blame
> Of others but my own ; I should, in truth,
> As far as doth concern my single self,
> Misdeem most widely, lodging it elsewhere :
> For I, bred up 'mid Nature's luxuries,
> Was a spoiled child, and, rambling like the wind,
> As I had done in daily intercourse
> With those crystalline rivers, solemn heights,
> And mountains, ranging like a fowl of the air,
> I was ill-tutored for captivity ;
> To quit my pleasure, and, from month to month,
> Take up a station calmly on the perch
> Of sedentary peace.[2]

The most interesting point about Wordsworth's university life is, and was, one might almost say, to him,[3] the curious accident which brought Coleridge up to Cambridge just after he himself had gone down. Very different indeed might have been the college life of each of the two poets had they met as Freshmen, the one from his breeding ''mid Nature's luxuries,' the other 'from the heart of London,' but in 'all the strength and plumage of his youth,' and

[1] *Prelude*, iii. 373.

[2] *Ibid.* iii. 347.

[3] See the fine passage in *Prelude*, vi. 237-318, and contrast it with the somewhat spiritless style of most of Book iii.

unrelentingly possessed by thirst
Of greatness, love, and beauty.[1]

As it happened, this most fruitful of all friendships between English men of letters could not begin until some years after Wordsworth had left Cambridge.

In his summer vacations Wordsworth reverted to his beloved mountains, to those of his own home, to the Yorkshire dales, finally to the Alps of Switzerland. From these returns to his natural surroundings,

a comfort seemed to touch
A heart that had not been disconsolate:
Strength came where weakness was not known to be,
At least not felt; and restoration came
Like an intruder knocking at the door
Of unacknowledged weariness.[2]

One of these vacations he spent partly at Penrith, where his sister Dorothy and Mary Hutchinson were the comrades of his rambles. The latter was connected by marriage with the Cooksons, and had been at the same infant school with Wordsworth at Penrith; she was now

By her exulting outside look of youth
And placid under-countenance, first endeared[3]

to him, and was afterwards to become his wife. His sister Dorothy was from the first even more completely wrapped up in his spiritual life. There never can have been a more complete community of sentiment than between these two. Dorothy shared the poet's passion for open air life and wandering, his sensitiveness to the play of Nature's countenance and Nature's voice, his sense of language, his quick and strong emotions. In childhood she exercised such influence as a sister may upon her brother's coarser animal spirits:—

She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.[4]

[1] *Prelude*, vi. 304. [2] *Ibid.* iv. 153. [3] *Ibid.* vi. 226.
[4] *The Sparrow's Nest*, below, p. 116.

To her was appropriately addressed Wordsworth's first published poem, *An Evening Walk*, which was partly composed during the vacation just mentioned.

So completely did the brother and sister see with the same eyes that Wordsworth habitually made use of Dorothy's *Journals* as the groundwork of his poems, and that not only in his uninspired hours. In mental quality they were extraordinarily similar; it was the greater force and grasp of the man's mind that enabled him to absorb, as it were, her gifts into his own creative power.

The visit to Switzerland in his third Long Vacation was prompted in the first instance by the sovereignty of Nature in Wordsworth's mind;[1] but the journey on foot through France promised something more than the anticipation of the first sight of the Alps. For

> Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,
> France standing on the top of golden hours,
> And human nature seeming born again.[2]

This joy the travellers (for Wordsworth was walking with a college friend) found at its height, still unshadowed by the Terror. Yet even then such an incident as a domiciliary visit of soldiers to the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse, which they happened to witness, and mistook for the expulsion of the monks, jarred upon a contemplative and reverential nature. And, as was natural enough, the French Revolution was of much less intimate importance to the young poet than the glories of Chamouni and the Simplon, of

> Locarno! spreading out in width like Heaven,[3]

and

> Como, bosomed deep in chestnut groves.[4]

In January 1791 Wordsworth took his degree and left Cambridge. He was uncertain what to do next, and doubt

[1] *Prelude*, vi. 333.
[2] *Ibid.* vi. 339.
[3] *Ibid.* vi. 657.
[4] *Descriptive Sketches*, 78.

drew him, like most Englishmen, to London. He never became a part of the life of the 'vast metropolis'; but the visit helped to widen his imaginative vision. It was no longer inanimate Nature but the life of man that was thrust perforce before his eyes—

> And oft amid the 'busy hum' I seemed
> To travel independent of her help,
> As if I had forgotten her; but no,
> The world of human-kind outweighed not hers
> In my habitual thoughts; the scale of love,
> Though filling daily, still was light, compared
> With that in which *her* mighty objects lay.[1]

If Wordsworth had been born at a different time, he might have returned at once to his 'native regions,' and become the poet merely of mountains, streams, and trees. But he was to have his period of 'storm and stress,' and to come out of it the poet also of the human heart. In November 1791 he crossed over to France for a lengthened stay. During a few days' sojourn in Paris he visited such places of interest as the ruins of the Bastille;

> And from the rubbish gathered up a stone,
> And pocketed the relic, in the guise
> Of an enthusiast; yet, in honest truth,
> I looked for something that I could not find,
> Affecting more emotion than I felt.[2]

It was only some time after he had been in the country, first at Orleans and afterwards at Blois, and after the mere

> novelties in speech,
> Domestic manners, customs, gestures, looks,[3]

had ceased to be novelties, that he gradually became engrossed in the Revolution. His companions at Blois were chiefly officers of the army, all of them, except one, only anxious for an opportunity to restore the past. Wordsworth felt no sympathy with their rage or their royalism. In his own boyhood he had scarcely set eyes on any one who claimed

[1] *Prelude*, viii. 680. [2] *Ibid.* ix. 69. [3] *Ibid.* 82.

respect on the score of either wealth or blood;[1] the university as a Republic of 'scholars and gentlemen'[2] was not a place to foster sentimental loyalty; nor was Wordsworth at any time more inclined than the average dalesman to pay to the trappings of conventional power that homage of awe which was, as it were, claimed beforehand by the forces of Nature. He was thus drawn into intimacy with the one 'patriot' amongst these officers, Michel Beaupuy, a disinterested lover of mankind and a gallant soldier, who was killed while commanding a division at the battle of Emmendingen in 1796,[3] Long discussions with Beaupuy and the influence of his pure enthusiasm gave reality to Wordsworth's political speculations, and fired him with a belief in the success of the Revolution. He came to Paris, therefore, on his way home, 'with ardour heretofore unfelt,'[4] almost sufficient to make him an actor in the drama. In spite of his faith in the cause of Liberty, such panicstricken blunders of its sons as the September massacres, which had taken place only a month earlier, and the growing violence of extreme leaders like Robespierre, showed him, what history was afterwards to show all of us, that one single brain and will was needed to recover the ship of the State from mere weltering in the trough of the waves. Since Napoleon had not yet appeared, a young poet may be pardoned for having suffered a dream[5] of being perchance the instrument of Heaven for rallying and revivifying the Gironde. But France was to wait for her Napoleon; and England was not to lose her poet by the guillotine.

Wordsworth returned to England, to be met with a blow that struck him in a more vital part than anything he had seen or heard of in France. His 'own belovèd country' joined the league of France's enemies, of the enemies of the cause of liberty. Wordsworth's excitability was controlled

[1] *Prelude*, ix. 215 foll. [2] *Ibid.* 229. [3] For Beaupuy see below, vol. iii. p. 577.
[4] *Prelude*, x. 49. [5] *Ibid.* x. 120-236.

by strong common sense; and he never possessed the strange power of horror-striking fascination which made Coleridge's *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter* the rarest of curiosities, a living political lampoon. One can scarcely imagine, then, the disturbance of his feelings that must have taken place when he actually felt a dreadful exultation in the defeat of English soldiers—

> It was a grief,—
> Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,—
> A conflict of sensations without name,
> Of which *he* only, who may love the sight
> Of a village steeple, as I do, can judge,
> When, in the congregation bending all
> To their great Father, prayers were offered up,
> Or praises for our country's victories;
> And, 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance
> I only, like an uninvited guest
> Whom no one owned, sate silent,—shall I add,
> Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come.[1]

It is difficult now not to feel even a certain abhorrence at this state of mind, but it is perhaps rather dullness of imagination than any moral superiority that makes it impossible to sympathise with Charles James Fox and Wordsworth.

For some time things went from bad to worse. The action of England only goaded France to madness:[2] and the madness of France destroyed the faith of lovers of liberty.[3]

> Most melancholy at that time, O Friend!
> Were my day-thoughts,—my nights were miserable;
> Through months, through years, long after the last beat
> Of those atrocities, the hour of sleep
> To me came rarely charged with natural gifts:
> Such ghastly visions had I of despair
> And tyranny, and implements of death;
> And innocent victims sinking under fear,
> And momentary hope, and worn-out prayer,
> Each in his separate cell, or penned in crowds

[1] *Prelude*, x. 288. [2] *Ibid.* 331 foll. [3] *Ibid.* 374 foll.

> For sacrifice, and struggling with fond mirth
> And levity in dungeons, where the dust
> Was laid with tears. Then suddenly the scene
> Changed, and the unbroken dream entangled me
> In long orations, which I strove to plead
> Before unjust tribunals,—with a voice
> Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
> Death-like, of treacherous desertion, felt
> In the last place of refuge—my own soul.[1]

The force of a pure heart and of a poet's faith[2] kept Wordsworth from falling into the ranks of the scoffers[3] and the timid; and the fall of Robespierre came like a burst of sunshine through the clouds. Wordsworth was riding one day over the sands 'of Leven's ample estuary,' when he met a troop of tourists, the foremost of whom, instead of any other salutation, cried to him, 'Robespierre is dead!'[4]

But though

> From that time forth, Authority in France
> Put on a milder face; Terror had ceased,[5]

yet the darkest hour of trial had not yet come. It was when,

> become oppressors in their turn,
> Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
> For one of conquest,[6]

that Wordsworth's mind, driven in upon itself for its only support, attempted to build out of abstract principles and the philosophy of Godwin a place to hide it in.

> So I fared,
> Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds,
> Like culprits to the bar; . . .
> . . . till, demanding formal *proof*,
> And seeking it in everything, I lost
> All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
> Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
> Yielded up moral questions in despair.[7]

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[1] *Prelude*, x. 397. [2] *Ibid.* 437 foll. [3] *Ibid.* 470 foll.
[4] *Ibid.* 573. [5] *Ibid.* xi. 1. [6] *Ibid.* 206. [7] *Ibid.* 293.

The poets were no help. Their conceptions and ideals were exposed to the same withering criticism. The 'visible Universe,' instead of being watched and honoured and loved as of old, was scanned 'with microscopic view,'[1] and judged 'by rules of mimic art.'[2] Even the mere excitement of the past months had temporarily impaired the poet's true sense of beauty.[3]

So at least it seemed to Wordsworth as he looked back ten years later. It is worth while to follow with some care these

> perturbations of a youthful mind
> Under a long-lived storm of great events,[4]

for the very reason that they left slight traces on the surface of his poetry, other than *The Prelude*. But in fact they were the pangs of travail to bring forth that poetry. They gave it humanity, depth, force. They peopled the beloved landscape of the poet neither with the nymphs and swains nor with the frigid abstractions of the mere sentimentalist, but with real men and women.

Wordsworth has told us, in lines instinct with feeling, to whom before any other human being he owed his recovery from 'that strong disease'[5] which beset him—

> Then it was—
> Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good!—
> That the belovèd Sister in whose speaking
> Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
> Of sudden admonition—like a brook
> That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
> Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn,
> Companion never lost through many a league—
> Maintained for me a saving intercourse
> With my true self; for, though bedimmed and changed
> Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
> Than as a clouded and a waning moon:
> She whispered still that brightness would return;

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[1] *Prelude*, xii. 91. [2] *Ibid.* 111. [3] *Ibid.* 198-201.
[4] *Ibid.* xi. 372. [5] *Ibid.* 306.

> She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
> A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
> And that alone, my office upon earth ;
> And lastly, as hereafter will be shown,
> If willing audience fail not, Nature's self,
> By all varieties of human love
> Assisted, led me back through opening day
> To those sweet counsels between head and heart
> Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with peace,
> Which, through the later sinkings of this cause,
> Hath still upheld me, and upholds me now[1] . . .

In the later lines of this passage one can scarcely fail to be reminded of Coleridge. If the influence of his sister Dorothy, and to some extent that of their friend from childhood who was afterwards, in 1802, to become his wife,[2] were the chief sanative[3] powers of Wordsworth's troubled days, it was Coleridge, before any one else, who opened the poetic sources of his mind, and bade the streams to flow. After his return from France, Wordsworth made London his home, or rather the starting-point from which he made many of those excursions, which always delighted him and gave the stimulus, as they often gave the titles, to his poems. His pleasure even in travelling, however, was at this period clouded over, not only by the spiritual crisis just described, but by financial straits and anxiety for the future. The choice of a career had always been a difficulty to him. The law, in which his uncle, Richard Cookson, could give him a start, repelled him. He had thought much of becoming a clergyman, but it had become increasingly plain that that was not his vocation. He was equally unfitted to become a soldier or a journalist, though both careers were considered. In spite of his period of scepticism and revolt, he never really lost hold of the purpose which he had early formed, of being a poet, a 'dedicated spirit.' In the meantime, such a purpose, in a

[1] *Prelude*, xi. 333.
[2] *Ibid.* xiv. 266 foll.
[3] The word is Wordsworth's: *Prelude*. xi. 396.

poor man, inevitably seems unreasonable to his older, if not to his younger, relatives; and Wordsworth suffered something from the displeasure of his uncles. In 1795, however, one of his friends, Raisley Calvert, died, leaving him a legacy of £900, with the express purpose of enabling him to adopt the life of a poet, freed for the present from the necessity of seeking a more remunerative employment. The gift, comparable to that bestowed by the Wedgwoods upon Coleridge, is recorded in *The Prelude*.[1] During the same year, Wordsworth, coming with his sister Dorothy to settle in the west country, first made the acquaintance of Coleridge, who had already conceived a great admiration for him from reading the *Descriptive Sketches* published two years before. The acquaintance fast ripened into close friendship and ardent partnership in poetry,—a partnership in which Coleridge gave even more than he got, and perhaps the more so because neither of the friends would have dreamt that this was the case. Wordsworth was a couple of years the elder of the two, at a time of life when a small difference of age goes for a good deal. He had, besides, that independence or self-dependence of character which often accompanies other fine and enduring qualities, but which is apt to be blind to obligations under which it would chafe if they were recognised. Coleridge said of him in words that give one an impression of both their characters: 'Wordsworth is the only man to whom *at all times* and *in all modes of excellence* I feel myself inferior.'[2]

The quick impressionable mind and emotions of Coleridge did indeed promptly respond to the contact of Wordsworth's strong personality. Not content with insisting among his own admirers, like Charles Lamb, on the superiority of Wordsworth's poetry to his own, he, consciously or unconsciously,

[1] *Prelude*, xi. 348 foll.

[2] Letter to Southey, July 1797. *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, vol. i. p. 224.

imitated it.[1] But no one can be familiar with the lives and works of the two men and not feel how deeply Wordsworth was penetrated with the fine and subtle quicksilver, as it were, of that extraordinary intellect. Wordsworth, though his retentive memory was familiar with English poetry, and he was well read in history, and some Italian poets, and acquainted with French and Spanish, was scarcely more than the average man compared with Coleridge's vast range of reading. In philosophy, especially, whether applied to the principles of poetry or to those of religion and metaphysics, Coleridge was the master, Wordsworth the disciple:—a disciple, it is true, whose strong character exercised a natural selection in assimilating what he learnt, and who probably never sympathised with the more subtle processes of abstract thought; but one who, nevertheless, owed to Coleridge much of the armour with which he fought his literary battle and the semi-philosophical mysticism in which his love of nature and faith in its blessed intercommunion with man and with God were expressed. But, above all, the ebullience and generosity of Coleridge's mind and heart, his swift apprehension and sympathy, his irrepressible affection and hopefulness and life, these things, together with the influences of Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Hutchinson, were of immense, though quite incalculable, importance to Wordsworth's development. Nothing in Wordsworth's eloquent recognition of these three nourishers of his genius is more true or more eloquent than this apostrophe to Coleridge:—

[1] This is well brought out by Professor Legouis, *La Jeunesse de W. Wordsworth*, pp. 363 and 365, where he points out the indebtedness of Coleridge's *The Destiny of Nations*, ll. 172-245 to Wordsworth's *Guilt and Sorrow*, stanzas LX. LXIII., and of *Osorio* to *The Borderers*. 'C'est alors que Coleridge entendit lire les *Borderers* et s'en engoua au point de les imiter dans la seconde partie d'une tragédie, *Osorio*, dont il avait déjà écrit deux actes et demi. Frappé par le caractère du traître Oswald, il lui prit son orgueil et sa philosophie cynique pour le propre traître de sa pièce. Imitation flagrante et qui commence juste à l'endroit de sa tragédie où Coleridge s'était arrêté avant de connaître les *Borderers*.'

> O capacious Soul!
> Placed on this earth to love and understand,
> And from thy presence shed the light of love.[1]

Coleridge, all through his life, was not content with giving; he must lavish himself, his love, his knowledge, and powers of all sorts on whomsoever happened to come in his way. That is why, notwithstanding his weakness, nobody can long avoid loving Coleridge; while of Wordsworth, even when we have come to love him as we could only love one of the chief brighteners, helpers, consolers of our life, we scarcely venture to speak of our love, lest it seem in some measure disrespectful.

Wordsworth and his sister had been lent a farmhouse at Racedown, and took up their abode in October 1795. Coleridge settled in the now famous little cottage at Nether Stowey, on the Minehead and Bridgewater road, at the end of 1796. In July 1797, after an exchange of visits,[2] the Wordsworths moved to Alfoxden, about three miles from Nether Stowey, where they lived for very nearly a year. It was during this period—

> That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
> Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
> Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs,[3]

that the *Lyrical Ballads* were planned and in the main composed. A story is told by Coleridge, with his usual good-humoured diffuseness,[4] how a Government spy was sent down to Nether Stowey to watch the motions of Coleridge and Wordsworth, suspected of Jacobin principles and seditious purposes. The spy, 'a very honest fellow,' says Coleridge, could make out nothing from his eavesdropping but a great

[1] *Prelude*, xiv. 277.

[2] It was while visiting Coleridge (July 2nd to 16th) that Wordsworth first met Charles Lamb, who also stayed at Nether Stowey from July 9th to 16th.

[3] *Prelude*, xiv. 395.

[4] *Biographia Literaria*, c. x. *ad med.*

deal of talking and reading about poetry and philosophy. Little did he or the ingenious authors of the *Anti-Jacobin* understand that the two 'suspects' were indeed revolutionaries to much greater effect than if their efforts had been directed towards the landing of a French fleet in Porlock Bay.

The *Lyrical Ballads* appeared anonymously 'on or about'[1] the 1st September 1798. Coleridge's share in the venture consisted of two passages taken from his tragedy *Osorio* (afterwards re-named *Remorse*), *The Nightingale*, and *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*. Wordsworth contributed nineteen poems, in styles as various as those of *Expostulation and Reply*, *Goody Blake and Harry Gill*, *Lines written in Early Spring*, and *Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey*. Volumes have been written about the poetical principles in illustration of which these *experiments*, as the majority of the poems were called in the Advertisement, were launched into the world. One short word must here suffice for the benefit of those who have not read those volumes.

One chief aim, then, of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in so far as they were experiments, was to prove by example that there neither is nor should be any distinction between the words suitable for poetry and those suitable for prose. This is the aim set out in the *Advertisement* prefixed to the first edition. Ever since the Restoration, Society had bound itself more and more with the shackles of an artificial code of idle manners; and verse-writing, which was mainly no more than an amusement of society, had become more and more a matter of conventional phraseology and so-called 'poetic diction.'[2] The most cherished ambition of an

[1] *Lyrical Ballads*, edited by Thomas Hutchinson (London: Duckworth and Co., 1898). Introd. p. ix.

[2] It is impossible in so short a summary of the poetical tendency of a century and a half not to seem to do injustice to the men of force and genius who wrote in that period: but perhaps I may avoid misconception by adding that I read much

Erasmus Darwin, so far as style was concerned, was to call a spade by the periphrasis which would most remotely suggest so vulgar an object. The artificiality of the age had affected genuine poets like Gray and Collins; but to understand that Wordsworth and Coleridge had a battle to win, one must remember the hundred poetasters, male and female, whose very names have long been forgotten, because they had not even the vitality of a Darwin nor the laureateship of a Pye. Wordsworth's own earliest published poems, *An Evening Walk*, and *Descriptive Sketches*, though they contained many felicities of expression and abundant promise of genuine poetic insight and truth, are bespangled with gew-gaws of that 'gaudiness and inane phraseology' which he was afterwards to denounce so strongly; indeed the length to which he went in the naked simplicity of some of his *Lyrical Ballads* is partly to be explained as the reaction of one who had not only observed, but in his own person experienced, the glamour of the false ideal of poetic diction.

The other principal aim, stated in the *Preface* to the second, enlarged, edition, 'was to make the incidents of common life interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature.'[1] Here Wordsworth was combating quite a different, and a much more modern, evil than conventional poetic diction—the 'degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation,' which was catered for by 'frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.'[2] This extract from the *Preface* is enough to dispel the old illusion, if it anywhere survives, that Wordsworth was a pioneer of the Romantic movement. That movement

of the work of the so-called Augustan age of English poetry with pleasure, and am, in particular, a hearty admirer of Pope. Still I do not think that I mis-state in the text the morbid symptoms of the poetry of that age.

[1] P. x. of the original ed. (1800). [2] *Ibid.* p. xix.

had been afoot for at least half a century when the *Lyrical Ballads* were published. He himself in his half-fledged efforts, referred to above, had indulged in a romantic melancholy, adopted, no doubt unconsciously, as part of the conventional trappings of a poet, and sufficiently belied by his letters of the same period. But the mawkish sentimentality and disorderliness of the prevalent romantic style, he could not abide; and its more legitimate appeal to the spirit of adventure, even when controlled by the manly sense of a Walter Scott, always seemed to him somewhat too trivial to be the function of so high a power as poetry.[1] One characteristic of his own poems which in his opinion distinguished them from 'the popular poetry of the day,' was 'that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.'[2]

Out of the *Lyrical Ballads* and their short Advertisement, which was written by Wordsworth, grew the larger *Preface* and *Essay*, in which at a later date the poet maintained and developed his theory of poetry. That strain of obstinacy, which was a part of his self-dependence, made him undaunted but not always perfectly judicious in polemics. Coleridge, who was both the surer and the subtler critic, modified for himself, and attempted to explain away in some measure for his friend, so much as seemed exaggerated in the new doctrine, or gave any handle to such mockery as Byron's description of the poet—

> Who both by precept and example shows
> That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose.

The *Lyrical Ballads* obtained a somewhat mixed reception, in which disfavour predominated. Southey, who was acquainted with Wordsworth and brother-in-law to Coleridge, younger than both, and far more self-satisfied than either,

[1] Cp. his letter to Scott in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, ch. xvi.
[2] *Preface*, p. xvii.

reviewed them with all the superiority of a clever but somewhat commonplace young man. The *Ancyent Marinere* is called 'a Dutch attempt at German sublimity.'[1] There seems little doubt but that there was a spice of malice in Southey's criticism; and, estimable as was his character in many respects, he was both young and vain: but the limitations of the author of *Madoc* would perhaps scarcely have left room for appreciation of a work of genius, which even now that it has become 'familiar in our mouths as household words,' is perhaps the most startling poem in the English language. It should in fairness be added that Wordsworth himself was not very much less in the dark than Southey and the rest of the critics, and spent some pains, in a note to the second edition of the Ballads, to point out the four 'great defects' of the poem.[2]

But whatever may have been the importance of the *Lyrical Ballads* in the history of English literature, they are the first-fruits of Wordsworth's own true harvest. From this time onwards his life never suffers from unsteadiness of aim. Without neglecting everyday interests and duties, he lived the life of a poet as completely as any other who has borne the name. And, as was natural, he soon reverted to the original home and nursery of his genius. After a visit of some seven months to Germany, mainly remarkable for the excellence and the essentially English character of the poems[3] which he wrote during a cold and dull winter at Goslar, he returned with Dorothy to England, and at the end of the same year, 1799, settled with her in that little cottage[4] in the vale of

[1] Quoted by Mr. Hutchinson: *op. cit.* p. xviii.

[2] Mr. Hutchinson: *op. cit.* p. xxvi. note.

[3] *E.g. Lucy Gray*, the 'Lucy' set of poems, *Ruth.*

[4] Dove Cottage, in Wordsworth's time known as Town-End, was originally a small public-house, with the sign of the Dove and Olive Bough, standing at the foot of the high road from Ambleside to Grasmere where it came close down to the lake. The more modern road, made in Wordsworth's time, is lower down, between Dove Cottage and the lake. For the Dove and Olive Bough cp. *The Waggoner*, Canto I. ll. 52-60, below, vol. I. p. 285.

Grasmere which has within the last few years been secured and restored as the Mecca of Wordsworthians. Here for the greater part of eight years he lived with the frugality of a peasant, but rich in thoughts and affections, free of Nature's most exquisite and noblest territories. Here in 1802 he brought Mary Hutchinson, his wife—

> no more a phantom to adorn
> A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
> And yet a spirit, there for me enshrined
> To penetrate the lofty and the low;
> Even as one essence of pervading light
> Shines, in the brightest of ten thousand stars,
> And the meek worm that feeds her lonely lamp
> Couched in the dewy grass.[1]

Here three of their children were born. Here he was visited by Walter Scott, after first visiting him on that tour in Scotland which produced among others the poems about Burns, *The Solitary Reaper*, and *Yarrow Unvisited*. Here the intimacy with Coleridge was continued, and Book I. of *The Recluse*, a large part of *The Excursion*, practically all *The Prelude*, and many of the best of the shorter poems, were written. Here, too, 'the discipline and consummation of a Poet's mind' were, so far as it is possible to mark off distinct stages in the life of the mind, completed by the first great personal grief which Wordsworth was called upon to suffer. In 1805 his brother John, nearest and dearest of his family after Dorothy, went down in the East Indiaman, *Earl of Abergavenny*, of which he was captain, off the Bill of Portland.[2]

The years at Dove Cottage will always be that part of Wordsworth's life upon which imagination most fondly lingers. That 'little Nook of mountain-ground,' so tiny that it is filled to overflowing with the memories that haunt it, seems to shine with the very radiance of love and joy. Nor is this

[1] *Prelude*, xiv. 268. Cf. 'She was a Phantom of delight,' vol. I. p. 310.
[2] See vol. III. p. 13.

merely the work of fancy, the contrast of the peasant's cottage and the poet's life. Although the gift of the many years that followed[1] was rich in beauty and strength and consolation, there are both an exuberance and a reserve of power which mark, as is only natural, the poetry of the prime of the poet's manhood. The period between Wordsworth's beginning of friendship with Coleridge and his removal from Dove Cottage —the second of which dates is of course merely convenient where accuracy is impossible—has been truly enough called 'the spring-time of his genius';[2] and although each season has its proper honours, none can stir us with the joy of life and the mystery of promise, the 'part seen, imagined part,' so subtly as the spring. At the same time it is as true of Wordsworth as of Walter Scott, that, for a poet, 'his genius flowered late.' There is therefore a fullness of thought and a strength about the poems of this great decade which are sometimes wanting in poets whose genius is full-fledged before their manhood.

Few words need be said of Wordsworth's later life in an essay which pretends only to serve as an introduction to his poetry. His growing family, of which his wife's sister, Sara Hutchinson, became an almost constant member in 1805, compelled him to find a larger home than Dove Cottage. Accordingly he moved in 1808 to Allan Bank, a new house, less than half a mile from Grasmere, on the way to Easedale; and in 1811 to the Rectory, close by the church, where two of his children, Catherine and Thomas, died within six months, in 1812.

This was a time of much care to Wordsworth. For some years past Coleridge's unhappy malady, his inability to settle down to steady work or to domestic contentment, had given

[1] *E.g. Laodamia, Dion*, the later *Skylark, Yarrow Visited* and *Revisited*, the *Evening Voluntaries*, and a great quantity of the sonnets.

[2] By Principal Shairp: quoted by Prof. Dowden in Aldine Edition of Wordsworth, vol. I. p. lxxii.

increasing anxiety to the Wordsworth circle. In the autumn of 1810 some well-meant remarks of Wordsworth to Basil Montagu, with whom Coleridge was intending to stay, were indiscreetly, and, beyond doubt, inaccurately, repeated to Coleridge. The result was a misunderstanding and a breach in the relations of the two friends for upwards of a year and a half. In May 1812, when Wordsworth was in London, they were reconciled through the good offices of Henry Crabb Robinson, an admirer of Wordsworth, and from about this time one of his most constant correspondents and visitors. But although the mutual affection of two such men was too deeply founded to be uprooted by any shock, their ideas and opinions, as well as their ways of life, had developed in directions too widely apart, and their natural differences of character had become too stereotyped, for any complete recovery of the 'glad, confident morning' of their intimacy. Wordsworth, like Southey, continued to show unstinted kindness to Coleridge's family; and Coleridge continued to feel and express his old veneration and love of Wordsworth. But with his perfect loyalty and his tenacity of character, Wordsworth had a certain lack of sympathy, a certain aloofness in his self-dependence, which in this middle period of his life was in danger of becoming a somewhat Puritanical self-esteem, owing, as his friends saw, to the remoteness of his daily life from the give-and-take of ordinary society, and, we may add, to his struggle with poverty and the slow progress of his poetry in the estimation of the public.[1] In his later years, while retaining the austerity

[1] Space forbids me to enter into details, but among the many indications upon which the above passage is founded I will refer the reader to the following passages quoted in Prof. Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, vol. II. (x.):—p. 178 (from Crabb Robinson's Diary, May 9, 1812:—'A call on C. Lamb. . . . He is of opinion that any attempt to bring W. and C. together must prove ineffectual. Perhaps he thinks it mischievous. He thinks W. cold. It may be so. Healthful coolness is preferable to the heat of disease.' *Ibid.* p. 186. Letter of Mrs. Clarkson, March 29, 1813:—'. . . Indeed, I see in the effects of these losses [of the two children] upon them [the Wordsworths] the evil of living so entirely out of the world, especially in that country. . . . Those mountains give a character of permanency to everything

of his inmost character, Wordsworth was sensibly mellowed by a peaceful and honoured life.

His release from financial anxiety came in March 1813, when through the kindness of Lord Lonsdale he was appointed Distributor of Stamps for Westmoreland. He was never wealthy, or even what most people of his rank in society would consider 'comfortably off'; but both he and his family were completely indifferent to luxury. His official work was light, though to the poet, when he undertook it, the responsibility seemed sufficiently serious;[1] it was lightened too by the services of his devoted clerk, John Carter, who soon shared the labours of other members of the household as the poet's amanuensis, who read the proofs of his later publications, and finally became his literary executor and editor of the posthumous *Prelude*. About the time of his obtaining the Distributorship, Wordsworth settled at Rydal Mount, which was his home for the remaining thirty-seven years of his life.

These years were marked by no striking events. The great poem, which *The Recluse* was to have been, was never completed. As Wordsworth's reputation gradually established itself not only among a few enlightened men of letters, like Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, and de Quincey, but among the intelligent part of the younger generation at large, so his

else. . . . Our friends have no *acquaintances*. They have neighbours, but in their present circumstances they need the sight of *equals* who are not intimate friends. . . . In the end, no doubt, this acquisition to their income will be a great good—it will enable them to obey the generous impulses of their nature. It will relieve the females from a great deal of hard work, which they have performed most cheerfully, but which has certainly at times been prejudicial to them. It will raise them in the opinion of the world, and increase their usefulness, and what is the greatest good of all, it will release Wordsworth's mind from all anxiety about money.' *Ibid.* 212, C. R.'s Diary, March 24, 1813:—'W. will now be independent of the world, and may devote himself to poetry without any of the cares and anxieties of penury, and I have no doubt his moral feelings will be improved by the improvement of his condition. He will now move with the world, and lose those peculiarities of feeling which solitude and discontent engender; while all that is beautifully individual and original, in the frame of his mind and character, will display itself with ease and grace.'

[1] Knight's *Life*, vol. II. (x.) pp. 210, 211.

creative power gradually waned. With exceptions numerous and brilliant enough to furnish a second-rate poet with title-deeds to a holding on England's Parnassus, his poetry becomes more critical and didactic, less original, less powerful, less compelling. His interest in large political questions increased rather than abated, and he maintained throughout his absolute sincerity and high ideals. But when his early hopes, engendered by the French Revolution, had been killed by the Reign of Terror and the Napoleonic Military Empire, the reaction of his moral sense threw him into a strong distrust of reform. And he had as much as any poet an imaginative sympathy with the past, which strengthened this political timidity. Thus a large part of his later writings, both poems and letters, is devoted to solemn warnings, sometimes wise, always sensible, but often prejudiced, against such measures as the Reform Bill of 1832 or the proposed abolition of capital punishment, or to the support of historic institutions like the Church of England, the history of which he traced with loving ardour, but with seldom-inspired verse, in the long series of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*.

As the years went on, Wordsworth's acquaintances and admirers grew to a large number. He had never been a recluse, but he became more sociable. His nature was not one, however, to expand readily into new intimacies, or even to maintain a constant communication with the old. He hated the manual labour of writing. His letters are not numerous, nor, for the most part, intimate in tone. They are long and devoid of sparkle, but full of strong sense and nobility of thought, expressed in deliberate but unaffected language. His published prose works are marked by the same characteristics, heightened on occasion to impassioned eloquence. As a rule he preferred the society of women to that of men. This was partly due to habit, partly, no

doubt, to the greater readiness of women to appreciate without criticism, but chiefly, perhaps, to a certain austerity and unblemished simplicity of heart which are rarely at home in men's companies. His closest friends, outside his immediate family circle, were Sir George and Lady Beaumont. Sir George was a cultivated and amiable patron of the arts, himself considered one of the best amateur landscape painters of his day, who was first attracted to Wordsworth by his poetry, and played the Mæcenas in a most practical way by giving Wordsworth a small property at the foot of Skiddaw, lending him a farmhouse on his property at Coleorton in Leicestershire, and finally at his death in 1827 leaving him an annuity of £100: both he and his wife became much attached to the Wordsworths, who reciprocated their affectionate esteem.[1] Henry Crabb Robinson, mentioned above, and Miss Ida Fenwick, to whom the garrulous but invaluable *Fenwick Notes* were dictated, were most intimate with Wordsworth in later years. For Southey he felt an increasing regard as common anxieties and similar religious and political views drew them together; he never thought very highly of Southey's poetry. Scott's poetry was in much the same case, and the novels, though he acknowledged their fertility and ease, interested him little more than, in mature life, did other works of mere observation and romance: but Scott's manly and generous character charmed him and evoked two of the most beautiful of his later poems.[2] For

[1] To Lady Beaumont was addressed the long letter (*Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, by Christopher Wordsworth, vol. i. p. 331) which gives the best account of Wordsworth's lofty conception of his calling and his self-confidence in the face of detraction. Hearing of Sir George Beaumont's death, Scott wrote of him in his diary:—'By far the most sensible and pleasing man I ever knew—kind, too, in his nature, and generous—gentle in society, and of those mild manners which tend to soften the causticity of the general London tone of persiflage and personal satire. . . . He was the great friend of Wordsworth, and understood his poetry, which is a rare thing, for it is more easy to see his peculiarities than to feel his great merit, or follow his abstract ideas.'—Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, ch. lxxiii.

[2] *Yarrow Revisited* and *Sonnet on the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford, for Naples*. See vol. II. pp. 166-169.

his old friends of Quantock days, Tom Poole and Charles Lamb, he retained a constant regard; and among younger men who enjoyed his intimacy may be mentioned John Wilson, who under his pseudonym of Christopher North was one of the first to praise him in the press as well as to imitate him in his own verses, Edward Quillinan, who married his daughter Dora in 1841, Thomas Arnold, the famous Headmaster of Rugby, and Christopher Wordsworth, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, his nephew and first biographer.

In 1842 he resigned his post as Distributor of Stamps in favour of his son William, who had for eleven years acted as his deputy, and in the same year, on the recommendation of Sir Robert Peel, prompted by Gladstone, he was granted a pension of £300 a year on the Civil List. Three years before, he had received the degree of D.C.L. at the University of Oxford, amid the acclamations of the theatre; and in 1843, on the death of Southey, he accepted the Laureateship, on the understanding that he should not be called upon to harness himself to the work of writing Odes to order. The death of his daughter, Dora Quillinan, in 1847, was a blow from which he never recovered; for though to the world in general he seemed, and was, somewhat self-centred and reserved, his affection for the inmates of his heart was deep and even passionate.[1] In March 1850, just before his eightieth birthday, he took a chill from sitting on a stone seat to watch the sun set; on April 23rd he quietly passed away. He was buried in a corner—the 'Poet's Corner'—of Grasmere churchyard, close to the Rotha, which flows through his well-loved Grasmere and Rydal Water.

[1] Cp. a letter of Dorothy Wordsworth to Miss Pollard in 1793 (Knight's *Life*, vol. i. (ix.) p. 80. '[Christopher] is steady and sincere in his attachments. William has both these virtues in an eminent degree; and a sort of violence of affection, if I may so term it, which demonstrates itself every moment of the day, when the objects of his affection are present with him, in a thousand almost imperceptible attentions to their wishes, in a sort of restless watchfulness which I know not how to describe, a tenderness that never sleeps, and at the same time such a delicacy of manners as I have observed in few men.'

The principal incidents of the poet's quiet life, besides those already mentioned, were his wanderings with his wife, his sister, and at times his daughter or a friend like Coleridge, in Scotland, England, Italy, or by the Rhine. His own passion for wandering is easily felt, not merely in the great quantity of 'itinerary' poems which he has left, but in the sympathetic and somewhat idealising way in which such characters as the 'Wanderer' of *The Excursion* and the 'Old Cumberland Beggar' are drawn.[1] At the outset of this essay, attention was drawn to the combination of *matter-of-factness*[2] and of imaginative insight, which seemed to constitute the greatest of all his powers to draw and to hold readers whom dullness or shallowness would weary, and a marked aloofness or eccentricity might very probably repel. Another combination of only second value, and perhaps even more easily appreciated, at least by those to whom Wordsworth's mysticism is a drawback, is one which is peculiarly characteristic of the English temperament. Vagrancy and domesticity—how few Englishmen with health and strength and opportunity do not show these two qualities at every turn? Wordsworth possessed them both in the high degree of a poet, and gave them both a poet's clearest utterance. The essence of vagrancy appears to be a passion for free motion among the myriad seemingly untrammelled lives of bird and beast and stream and plant, under no narrower roof than the universal sky. It can be summed up as effectually as need be in the phrase that is always on our tongue—'the open air.' And no poet more freely or vividly gives us the sensations of this 'open air' than Wordsworth. At the same time, from no other poet do we get a stronger impression of tenacity in clinging to that little spot of earth which

[1] Cp. also *The Prelude*, xiii. 120-185.

[2] The expression is Hazlitt's; but he is quoting or giving the meaning of words of Coleridge.

happens to be 'home,' and to the small circle of activities and affections which mark off by an indefinable but undeniable boundary the 'own' peculiar interest of each separate man or woman. This it is which more perhaps than any other quality gives Wordsworth's poetry its direct appeal to the 'general heart of man,' which is in nothing so universal as in the consciousness of personality.

Much more might be said, and much has been well said by good critics, on various aspects of Wordsworth's poetry. In spite of the bitter antagonism which it provoked, especially in Jeffrey, the pungent but narrow Johnson of Edinburgh criticism, it was not exceptionally slow in winning its way into the front rank of public estimation: and 'Time, who brings all things to the proof,' shows no disposition, and is not likely, to destroy a reputation which never owed anything to sensational tricks or happy accidents. By this time, in fact, there is scarcely any one of catholic taste and competent knowledge who would not name Wordsworth among the six or seven greatest of English poets. Enough has, however, been said, if it has been rightly said, by way of an introduction to his poetry for those who are intending for the first time to give that poetry the keen and receptive attention which is the condition of obtaining a real and permanent enjoyment from all great literature. But as it is the privilege of poetry to say in a few words what prose often fails to express in many, may I end with two quotations? The first, from Matthew Arnold's well-known *Memorial Verses*, records the debt of those for whom the most precious gift of the poet is to lighten 'the burthen of the mystery . . . of all this unintelligible world'—

> He laid us, as we lay at birth,
> On the cool, flowery lap of earth;
> Smiles broke from us, and we had ease;
> The hills were round us, and the breeze

Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth return'd; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
The freshness of the early world.

The second, the closing lines of *The Prelude*, shall give us the stronger and more buoyant spirit of Wordsworth himself. He is addressing Coleridge, the 'friend and brother of his soul,' and speaking of their joint labours for the happiness of their fellow-men—

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,
Others will love, and we will teach them how;
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of things
(Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of quality and fabric more divine.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1784

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
1784-85	1851	Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead.

1786

1786	1815	Extract from the Conclusion of a Poem composed in anticipation of leaving School.
(?) 1786	1802	Written in very Early Youth.

1787

1787	1787	Sonnet on seeing Miss H. M. Williams weep.
1787-89	1793	An Evening Walk.

1789

1789	1798	Lines written while sailing in a Boat at Evening.
1789	1798	Remembrance of Collins.

1791

1791-92	1793	Descriptive Sketches.
1791-94	Part in 1842 / Part in 1798	Guilt and Sorrow.

1792

Before May 1792	1883	Sonnet ('Sweet was the walk').

1795

Begun before Oct. 1787 / Finished not before 1795	1798	Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree.
(?) 1795	1795	The Birth of Love.
1795-96	1842	The Borderers.

1797

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
1797	1800	The Reverie of Poor Susan.
Probably 1797	14 Dec. 1797	The Convict.
1797-98	1800	The Old Cumberland Beggar.

1798

25 Jan. 1798	1815	A Night Piece.
1798	1798	We are Seven.
1798	1798	Anecdote for Fathers.
March 1798	1798	To my Sister.
18 March 1798	1800	'A whirl-blast from behind the hill.'
Begun 19 Mar. 1798	1798	The Thorn.
Begun 20 Apr. 1798	1819	Peter Bell. A Tale.
1798	1798	Lines written in Early Spring.
1798	1798	Her Eyes are Wild.
1798	1798	Goody Blake and Harry Gill.
1798	1798	Simon Lee.
1798	1798	Expostulation and Reply. The Tables Turned.
1798	1798	The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman.
1798	1798	The Last of the Flock.
1798	1798	The Idiot Boy.
13 July 1798	1798	Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey.
1798	1798	Animal Tranquillity and Decay.
1798	1800	There was a Boy.
1798	1842	Address to the Scholars of the Village School of ——.

1799

1799	1800	Written in Germany, on one of the coldest days of the Century.
1799	1800	'Strange fits of passion have I known.'
1799	1800	'She dwelt among the untrodden ways.'
(?) 1799	1807	'I travelled among unknown men.'
1799	1800	'Three years she grew in sun and shower.'
1799	1800	'A slumber did my spirit seal.'
1799	1800	A Poet's Epitaph.
1799	1800	To a Sexton.
1799	1800	The Danish Boy. A Fragment.
1799	1800	Lucy Gray; or, Solitude.
1799	1800	Ruth.
1799	1850	The Prelude (begun).
1799	1800	Nutting.
1799	1809	Influence of Natural Objects in calling forth and strengthening the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth.
1799	1800	Matthew.
1799	1800	The Two April Mornings.
1799	1800	The Fountain. A Conversation.
Dec. 1799	1800	To M. H.
(?) 1799	1845	The Simplon Pass.
1799 or 1800	1800	Ellen Irwin; or, the Braes of Kirtle.

1800

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
Probably in or before 1800	1807	The Affliction of Margaret ——.
Probably in or before 1800	1842	The Forsaken.
Jan. or Feb. 1800	1800	Hart-Leap Well.
About Feb. 1800	1800	The Brothers.
1800	1800	The Idle Shepherd-boys; or, Dungeon-Ghyll Force. A Pastoral.
1800	21 July 1800	The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale.
1800	1800	'It was an April morning: fresh and clear.'
Before 17 Aug. 1800	1807	The Seven Sisters.
Aug. 1800	1800	To Joanna.
29, 30 Aug. 1800-1802	1815	'When, to the attractions of the busy world.'
1800	1800	'There is an Eminence,—of these our hills.'
1800	1800	The Waterfall and the Eglantine.
1800	1800	The Oak and the Broom. A Pastoral.
1800	1800	''Tis said that some have died for love.'
1800	1800	The Childless Father.
1800	1800	The Pet Lamb. A Pastoral.
1800	1800	Song for the Wandering Jew.
Probably 1800	1800	Rural Architecture.
Probably 1800	1800	Andrew Jones.
1800	1800	The Two Thieves; or, The Last Stage of Avarice.
1800	1800	A Character.
1800	1800	Inscription for the spot where the Hermitage stood on St. Herbert's Island, Derwent-water.
1800	1800	Written with a Pencil upon a Stone in the Wall of the House (an Out-house) on the Island of Grasmere.
1800	1800	Written with a Slate Pencil upon a Stone, the largest of a heap lying near a deserted Quarry upon one of the Islands at Rydal.
10 Oct. 1800	1800	'A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags.'
Oct.-Dec. 1800	1800	Michael. A Pastoral Poem.
(?) 1800	1888	The Recluse. Book I.
Prob. between Dec. 1800 and Oct. 1801	1807	Louisa. After accompanying her on a mountain Excursion.
Prob. between Dec. 1800 and Oct. 1801	1807	To a Young Lady, who had been reproached for taking Long Walks in the Country.
Probably 1800	1851	'On nature's invitation do I come.'
Probably 1800	1851	'Bleak season was it, turbulent and bleak.'

1801

1801	1807	The Sparrow's nest.
1801	1815	'Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side.'
Finished 5 Dec. 1801	1820	The Prioress' Tale (from Chaucer).
Dec 1801	1841	The Cuckoo and the Nightingale (from Chaucer).
1801	1841	Troilus and Cresida (from Chaucer).
22 Dec. 1801-9 March 1802	1814	The Excursion. Part of Books I. and II.
26 Dec. 1801	1850	Part of The Prelude.
1801 or 1806	1820	'There is a little unpretending Rill.'

1802

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
11, 12 March 1802	1807	The Sailor's Mother.
12, 13 March 1802	1807	Alice Fell; or, Poverty.
13, 14 March 1802	1807	Beggars.
14 March 1802	1807	To a Butterfly ('Stay near me').
16, 17 March 1802	1807	The Emigrant Mother.
23-26 March 1802	1807	To the Cuckoo ('O blithe new-comer').
26 March 1802	1807	'My heart leaps up when I behold.'
12 April 1802	1807	'Among all lovely things my Love had been.'
16 April 1802	1807	Written in March, while resting on the Bridge at the foot of Brother's Water.
18 April 1802	1807	The Redbreast chasing the Butterfly.
20 April 1802	1807	To a butterfly ('I've watched you now').
27, 28 April 1802	1897	The Tinker.
28 April 1802	1807	Foresight.
30 April 1802	1807	To the Small Celandine ('Pansies, lilies').
1 May 1802	1807	To the same Flower ('Pleasures newly found').
3 May-4 July 1802	1807	Resolution and Independence.
9-11 May 1802	1815	Stanzas written in my Pocket-copy of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence.'
21 May 1802	1807	'I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain.'
Finished 29 May 1802	1815	A Farewell.
8 June 1802	1807	'The Sun has long been set.'
31 July 1802	1807	Composed upon Westminster Bridge.
August 1802	1807	Composed by the Sea-side, near Calais.
August 1802	1807	Calais, August, 1802.
7 August 1802	1807	Composed near Calais, on the Road leading to Ardres, August 7, 1802.
15 August 1802	1803	Calais, August 15, 1802.
August 1802	1807	'It is a beauteous evening, calm and free.'
Prob. Aug. 1802	1807	On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic.
Prob. Aug. 1802	1807	The King of Sweden.
Prob. Aug. 1802	1803	To Toussaint L'Ouverture.
30 Aug. 1802	1807	Composed in the Valley near Dover.
September 1802	1803	September 1, 1802.
September 1802	1807	September, 1802, near Dover.
September 1802	1807	Written in London, September, 1802.
1802	1807	London, 1802.
Probably 1802	1807	'Great men have been among us; hands that penned.'
Probably 1802	1803	'It is not to be thought of that the Flood.'
Probably 1802	1803	'When I have borne in memory.'
4 Oct. 1802	1807	Composed after a Journey across the Hambleton Hills, Yorkshire.
1802	1807	To H. C. Six years old.
1802	1807	To the Daisy ('In youth from rock to rock I went').
1802	1807	To the same Flower ('With little here to do or see').
1802	1807	To the Daisy ('Bright Flower').
Perhaps 1802	1807	'With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky.'

1803

Jan. 1803	1850	Part of The Prelude.
1803	1807	The Green Linnet.
1803	1807	'It is no Spirit who from heaven hath flown.'
1803	1807	'Who fancied what a pretty sight.'
1803	1815	Yew-trees.
18 Sept. 1803	1807	Sonnet. Composed at —— Castle.
25 Sept. 1803	1815	'Fly, some kind Harbinger, to Grasmere-dale.'

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
Oct. 1803	1807	October, 1803 ('One might believe that natural miseries').
Oct. 1803	1807	October, 1803 ('These times strike monied worldlings with dismay').
Oct. 1803	1807	October, 1803 ('When looking on the present face of things').
Oct. 1803	1807	To the Men of Kent.
Oct. 1803	1807	In the Pass of Killicranky.
Oct. 1803	1803	Anticipation. October, 1803.
(?) 1803	10 Oct. 1803	Sonnet ('I find it written of Simonides'). Probably by W. W.
1803	1842	Lines on the expected Invasion.
1803	1807	To a Highland Girl.
Nov. 1803	1807	Yarrow Unvisited.
Between Sept. 1803 and 11 Apr. 1805	1807	Rob Roy's Grave.
Between Sept. 1803 and May 1805	1807	Stepping Westward.
Between Sept. 1803 and May 1805	1807	The Matron of Jedborough and her Husband.
Between 1803 and 1805	1807	Glen Almain.
Between 1803 and 1805	1807	The Solitary Reaper.
Partly 1803 Partly 1827	Partly 1807 Partly 1827	To the Sons of Burns, after visiting the Grave of their Father.
Begun probably 1803	1842	At the Grave of Burns, 1803.
Begun 1803 Finished long after	1827	Address to Kilchurn Castle.
Probably 1803	1807	'England! the time is come when thou shouldst wean.'
Probably 1803	1807	'There is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear.'
Before 1804	1807	The Affliction of Margaret ——

1804

Feb.-April 1804	1850	The Prelude. Books III.-VII.
16 Sept. 1804	1815	Address to my Infant Daughter, Dora.
Oct.-Dec. 1804	1850	The Prelude. Books VIII.-XI.
1804	1842	At Applethwaite, near Keswick, 1804.
1804	26 Oct. 1809	French Revolution, as it appeared to Enthusiasts at its Commencement.
1804	1887	Inscription for a Summer House.
1804	1807	'I wandered lonely as a cloud.'
1804	1820	Repentance. A Pastoral Ballad.
1804	1807	'She was a Phantom of delight.'
1804	1807	The Kitten and the Falling Leaves.
1804	1807	The Small Celandine ('There is a flower, the lesser Celandine').
1804	1820	Vaudracour and Julia.

1805

April-May 1805	1850	The Prelude. Books XII.-XIV.
After July 20, in 1805	1807	Fidelity.

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
1805	1807	Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm.
1805	1842	Elegiac Verses in memory of my Brother, John Wordsworth.
1805	1807	From the Italian of Michael Angelo—I.
Probably 1805	1807	From the Italian of Michael Angelo—II.
1805	1807	From the Italian of Michael Angelo—III.
1805	1807	Incident characteristic of a Favourite Dog.
1805	1807	Tribute to the Memory of the same Dog.
1805	1807	Ode to Duty.
1805	1815	The Cottager to her Infant. By my Sister.
1805	1819	The Waggoner.
1805	1807	To a Skylark ('Up with me! up with me into the clouds!').
1805	1815	To the Daisy ('Sweet Flower! belike one day to have').

1806

Dec. 1805 or Jan. 1806	1807	Character of the Happy Warrior.
July 1806	1889	To the Evening Star.
Sept. 1806	1807	Lines composed at Grasmere ('Loud is the Vale!').
Nov. 1806	1807	November 1806 ('Another year!—another deadly blow!').
Nov. 1806	1807	To the Spade of a Friend.
1806	1815	Address to a Child, during a boisterous winter Evening. By my Sister.
Before Dec. in 1806	1807	A Complaint.
Before Dec. in 1806	1807	'O Nightingale! thou surely art.'
Before Dec. in 1806	1807	Power of Music.
Before Dec. in 1806	1807	Star-Gazers.
Before Dec. in 1806	1807	Stray Pleasures.
Before Dec. in 1806	1807	The Horn of Egremont Castle.
Before Dec. in 1806	1807	'Yes, it was the mountain Echo.'
Dec. 1806	1807	'How sweet it is when mother Fancy rocks.'
Prob. Dec. 1806	1807	The Blind Highland Boy.
Before Dec. 1806	1807	Admonition.
Before Dec. 1806	1807	'"Beloved Vale!" I said, "when I shall con."'
Before Dec. 1806	1807	'Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne.'
Before Dec. 1806	1807	'Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room.'
Before Dec. 1806	1807	'O Mountain Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot' (Sonnet xiv. of the River Duddon).
Before Dec. 1806	1807	Personal Talk.
Before Dec. 1806	1807	'The world is too much with us; late and soon.'
After 4 Oct. 1802	1807	'Those words were uttered as in pensive mood.'
After 4 Oct. 1802	1807	To Sleep. (Three Sonnets.)
After 4 Oct. 1802	1807	To the Memory of Raisley Calvert.
After 4 Oct. 1802	1807	'Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?'
After 4 Oct. 1802	1807	'With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh.'
(?) 1806	1815	'Brook! whose society the Poet seeks.'

1807

1806 or 1807	1807	Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland.
Jan. or Feb. 1807	1807	To Lady Beaumont.

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
Feb. 1807	1807	A Prophecy. February, 1807.
March 1807	1807	To Thomas Clarkson.
Apr. or May 1807	1815	The Mother's Return. By my Sister.
After 7 Aug. 1807	1819	Composed by the side of Grasmere Lake.
Sept. 1807	1815	The Force of Prayer; or, The Founding of Bolton Priory.
1807	1807	Gipsies.
1807	1807	Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.
1807	1807	'Though narrow be that old Man's cares, and near.'
1807-1810	1815	The White Doe of Rylstone.
?	1807	Admonition.

1808

Apr. 1808	1839	George and Sarah Green.
Nov. or Dec. 1808	1815	Composed while the Author was engaged in writing a Tract, occasioned by the Convention of Cintra. (Two Sonnets.)

1809

After Feb. 1809	1815	'Hail, Zaragoza! if with unwet eye.'
After Mar. 1809	1815	'Call not the royal Swede unfortunate.'
After Mar. 1809	1815	'Look now on that Adventurer who hath paid.'
After May 1809	1815	'Brave Schill! by death delivered, take thy flight.'
1809	26 Oct. 1809	Hofer.
1809	,, 1809	'Advance—come forth from thy Tyrolean ground.'
1809	16 Nov. 1809	'Alas! what boots the long laborious quest?'
1809	21 Dec. 1809	Feelings of the Tyrolese.
1809	,, 1809	'And is it among rude untutored Dales.'
1809	,, 1809	'O'er the wide earth, on mountain and on plain.'
1809	,, 1809	On the final Submission of the Tyrolese.
1809	28 Dec. 1809	'There never breathed a man who, when his life.' (Epitaphs translated from Chiabrera, IV.)
1809	,, 1809	'Destined to war from very infancy.' (Ep. from Chiabrera, VI.)
1809	4 Jan. 1810	'Not without heavy grief of heart did He.' (Ep. from Chiabrera, VIII.)
1809	,, 1810	'Pause, courteous Spirit!—Baldi supplicates.' (Ep. from Chiabrera, IX.)
1809	22 Feb. 1810	'Perhaps some needful service of the State.' (Ep. from Chiabrera, II.)
1809	,, 1810	'O Thou who movest onward with a mind.' (Ep. from Chiabrera, III.)
1809	1814	Part of The Excursion.
Probably 1809	1815	'Say, what is honour? 'Tis the finest sense.'
Probably 1809	1815	'Is there a power that can sustain and cheer.'

1810

1810	1815	'Ah! where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen.'
1810	1815	'In due observance of an ancient rite.'
1810	1815	Feelings of a noble Biscayan at one of those Funerals.
1810	1815	Indignation of a high-minded Spaniard.
1810	1815	'O'erweening Statesmen have full long relied.'
1810	1815	The Oak of Guernica.

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
1810	1814	Part of The Excursion.
Probably 1810	1815	'Avaunt all specious pliancy of mind.'
About 1810	1842	Maternal Grief.
1810	1815	On a celebrated Event in Ancient History. (Two Sonnets.)

1811

1810 or 1811	1815	The French and the Spanish Guerillas.
1811	1815	Spanish Guerillas.
1811	1815	'The power of Armies is a visible thing.'
1811	1815	'Here pause: the Poet claims at least this praise.'
Prob. Spring 1811	1815	Characteristics of a Child three years old.
Aug. 1811	1842	Epistle to Sir George Howland Beaumont, Bart.
Aug. 1811	1827	Departure from the Vale of Grasmere, 1803.
Aug. 1811 or earlier.	1815	Upon the sight of a beautiful Picture, painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.
November 1811 or earlier	1820	To the Poet, John Dyer.
November 1811	1815	Written at the request of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., and in his Name, for an Urn.
19 Nov. 1811	1815	For a Seat in the Groves at Coleorton.
1808-1811	1815	In the Grounds of Coleorton.
1811	1815	In a Garden of the Same.
1811	1814	Part of The Excursion.

1812

31 Oct. 1812	1815	Composed on the Eve of the Marriage of a Friend in the Vale of Grasmere.
1812	1814	Part of The Excursion.
1812	1820	Song for the Spinning Wheel.
(?) 1812	1819	'Grief, thou hast lost an ever-ready friend.'
(?) 1812	1823	Water-Fowl.
Probably 1812	1896	Through Cumbrian Wilds in many a mountain cave.
Perhaps 1812	1896	My Son! behold the Tide already spent.

1813

1813	1815	View from the top of Black Comb.
1813	1815	Written with a Slate Pencil on a Stone, on the side of the Mountain of Black Comb.
November 1813	1815	November, 1813.
1813	1814	Part of The Excursion.

1814

1814	1814	The Excursion (finished).
13 Nov. 1814	1815	Lines written on a Blank Leaf in a Copy of The Excursion.
1814	1815	Laodamia.
1814	1815	'From the dark chambers of dejection freed.'
1814	1815	Yarrow Visited, September, 1814.
Perhaps 1814	1820	Composed at Cora Linn.
Perhaps 1814	1820	The Brownie's Cell.
Perhaps 1814	1827	Effusion in the Pleasure-ground on the banks of the Bran, near Dunkeld.

1815

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
December 1815	1816	September, 1815.
December 1815	1816	November 1.
December 1815	1816	To B. R. Haydon ('High is our calling, Friend! Creative Art').
1815	1820	Artegal and Elidure.
After June 1812	1815	'Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind.'
?	1815	'Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress.'
?	1815	'Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!'
?	1815	'Mark the concentred hazels that enclose.'
?	1815	'The fairest, brightest, hues of either fade.'
?	1815	'The Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said.'
?	1815	'Weak is the will of Man, his judgment blind.'

1816

1815 or 1816	1816	Ode. 1815.
January 1816	1816	Ode. — The Morning of the Day appointed for a General Thanksgiving, January 18, 1816.
January 1816	1816	Ode, 1814.
Prob. Jan. 1816	1816	Ode ('Who rises on the banks of Seine').
Jan. or Feb. 1816	1816	Siege of Vienna raised by John Sobieski.
February 1816	1816	Invocation to the Earth, February, 1816.
February 1816	1816	The French Army in Russia, 1812-13.
February 1816	1816	On the same Occasion.
February 1816	1816	Occasioned by the Battle of Waterloo. (Two Sonnets.)
Prob. Feb. 1816	1827	'Emperors and Kings, how oft have temples rung.'
1816	1820	A Fact, and an Imagination; or, Canute and Alfred on the Sea-shore.
1816	1820	'*A little onward lend thy guiding hand.*'
1816	1820	Dion.
1816	1816	Feelings of a French Royalist on the Disinterment of the Remains of the Duke d'Enghien.
1816	1820	To ——, on her First Ascent to the Summit of Helvellyn.
In or about 1816	1832	Translation of part of the First Book of the Æneid.

1817

1817	1820	Vernal Ode.
May 1817	1820	Ode to Lycoris. May, 1817.
Summer 1817	1820	To the Same.
June 1817	1820	The Longest Day. Addressed to my Daughter.
1817	1820	Hint from the Mountains for certain Political Pretenders.
1817	1820	Lament of Mary Queen of Scots.
1817	1827	Sequel to 'Beggars.'
1817	1820	The Pass of Kirkstone.

1818

1818	1820	Composed upon an Evening of extraordinary Splendour and Beauty.
1818	1820	(Five) Inscriptions supposed to be found in and near a Hermit's Cell.
1818	1820	The Pilgrim's Dream; or, The Star and the Glow-worm.

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
1818	1819	'Pure element of waters.'
1818	1819	Malham Cove.
1818	1819	Gordale.

1819

Feb. 1819	1819	Composed during a Storm.
Summer 1819	1820	The Haunted Tree.
Sept. 1819	1820	September, 1819.
Sept. 1819	1820	Upon the same Occasion.
?	1819	'Aërial Rock—whose solitary brow.'
?	1819	Captivity—Mary Queen of Scots.
?	1819	Composed in one of the Valleys of Westmoreland, on Easter Sunday.
?	1819	'Fallen and diffused into a shapeless heap' (Sonnet XXVII. of The River Duddon).
?	1819	'I heard (alas! 'twas only in a dream).'
?	1819	'I watch, and long have watched, with calm regret.'
?	1819	The Wild Duck's Nest.
?	1819	To a Snowdrop.
?	1819	To the River Derwent.
?	1819	Written upon a Blank Leaf in 'The Complete Angler.
Not later than 1819	1820	'When haughty expectations prostrate lie.'

1820

?	1820	Composed on the Banks of a Rocky Stream.
?	1820	'The stars are mansions built by Nature's hand.'
?	1820	To the Lady Mary Lowther.
At intervals during many years	1820	The River Duddon. A Series of Sonnets.
Probably Feb. 1820	1820	On the death of His Majesty (George the Third).
1820	1820	Oxford. May 30, 1820. (Two Sonnets.)
1820	1820	June, 1820.
1820	1822	A Parsonage in Oxfordshire.
1820	1820	On the Detraction which followed the Publication of a certain Poem.
1820	1822	The Germans on the Heights of Hochheim.
Probably Nov.-Dec. 1820	1822	Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge. (Three Sonnets.)
1820-1822	1822	To Enterprise.

1821

1820 and mostly 1821	Feb. or March 1822	Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820.
1820 or 1821	,, 1822	Sonnet. Author's Voyage down the Rhine.
1821	,, 1822	Most of The Ecclesiastical Sonnets.
(?) 1821	1822	The Monument commonly called Long Meg and her Daughters.

1822

Perhaps Nov. or Dec. 1822	1827	'By Moscow self-devoted to a blaze.'

1823

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
1823	1827	Memory.
1823	1827	To the Lady Fleming, on seeing the Foundation preparing for the Erection of Rydal Chapel, Westmoreland.
1823	1827	On the same Occasion.
?	1823	'A volant Tribe of Bards on Earth are found.'
?	1823	'Not Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell.'

1824

Apr. or May 1824	1827	A Flower Garden at Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire.
Summer 1824	1827	To —— ('Look at the fate of summer flowers').
Between August and Oct. 1824	1827	To the Lady E. B. and the Hon. Miss P.
Between August and Oct. 1824	1827	To the Torrent at the Devil's Bridge.
Prob. Sept. 1824	1827	Composed among the Ruins of a Castle in North Wales.
Prob. Dec. 1824	1827	Elegiac Stanzas. Addressed to Sir G. H. B., upon the death of his Sister-in-law.
1824	1842	Cenotaph.
1824	1827	'How rich that forehead's calm expanse.'
1824	1827	To —— ('Let other bards of angels sing').
1824	1827	To —— ('O dearer far than light and life are dear').
1824	1827	To ——, in her Seventieth Year.
1824	1827	Written in a Blank Leaf of Macpherson's Ossian.

1825

1825	1827	The Contrast. The Parrot and the Wren.
1825	1827	To a Sky-Lark ('Ethereal minstrel! Pilgrim of the sky!').
1825 or 1826	1827	The Pillar of Trajan.

1826

1 May 1826	1835	Ode Composed on May Morning.
1826-1834	1835	To May.
1826	1827	'Ere with cold beads of midnight dew.'
1826	1827	'Once I could hail (howe'er serene the sky).'
1826	1835	'The massy Ways, carried across these heights.'
1826	1889	Composed when a probability existed of our being obliged to quit Rydal Mount.
?	1827	Decay of Piety.
?	1827	'Fair Prime of life! were it enough to gild.'
?	1827	'Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes.'
?	1827	'Her only pilot the soft breeze, the boat.'
?	1827	'In my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud.'
?	1827	In the Woods of Rydal.
?	1827	Recollection of the Portrait of King Henry Eighth.
?	1827	Retirement.
?	1827	'Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned.'
?	1827	The Infant M—— M——.
?	1827	'*There is a pleasure in poetic pains.*'
Some years after 1822	1827	To Rotha Q——.
?	1827	To S. H.

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
?	1827	To the Cuckoo.
?	1827	'When Philoctetes in the Lemnian isle.'
?	1827	'While Anna's peers and early playmates tread.'
?	1827	'Why, Minstrel, these untuneful murmurings.'
After 1821	1827	Ecclesiastical Sonnets (Part II., Nos. xxx., xxxiii., xxxiv.; Part III., Nos. vii., xi., xii., xx., xxiii., xxiv., xxv., xxxvi.).

1827

1827	1827	On seeing a Needlecase in the Form of a Harp.
Probably 1827	1827	Dedication. To —— ('Happy the feeling from the bosom thrown').
Probably 1827	1827	Conclusion. To ——.
After 1813	1827	'If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven.

1828

1828	1832	A Morning Exercise.
1828	1835	A Jewish Family.
1828	1829	The Gleaner, suggested by a picture.
1828	1829	The Triad.
1828	1829	The Wishing-Gate.
1828-9	1835	On the Power of Sound.
Probably 1828	1829	A Gravestone upon the Floor in the Cloisters of Worcester Cathedral.
Probably 1828	1829	A Tradition of Oker Hill in Darley Dale, Derbyshire.
Probably 1828	1842	Farewell Lines ('High bliss is only for a higher state').
Probably 1828	1829	Filial Piety.

1829

1829 or earlier	1889	Written in the Strangers' Book at 'The Station.'
1829	1835	Gold and Silver Fishes in a Vase.
1829	1835	Liberty (Sequel to the preceding).
1829	1835	Humanity.
1829	1835	'This Lawn, a carpet all alive.'
1829	1835	Thought on the Seasons.

1830

Nov. 1830	1835	Elegiac Musings in the grounds of Coleorton Hall.
Nov. 1830	1835	'Chatsworth! thy stately mansion, and the pride.'
1830	1835	Presentiments.
1830	1835	The Armenian Lady's Love.
1830	1835	The Egyptian Maid; or, The Romance of the Water Lily.
1830	1835	The Poet and the Caged Turtle-dove.
1830	1835	The Russian Fugitive.
1830 or 1831	1835	'In these fair vales hath many a Tree.'

1831

1831	1835	The Primrose of the Rock.
11 June 1831	1832	To B. R. Haydon, on seeing his Picture of Napoleon Buonaparte.
1831	1835	Composed after reading a Newspaper of the Day.
1831	1835	Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems. Composed (two excepted) during a Tour in Scotland, and on the English Border, in the Autumn of 1831.

1832

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
March 1832	1832	Upon the late General Fast.
Probably after Jan. 1827	1832	Sponsors (Ecclesiastical Sonnets, Part III., No. xxi.).
1832	1835	'Calm is the fragrant air, and loth to lose.'
1832	1835	Devotional Incitements.
1832	1835	Loving and Liking. By my Sister.
1832	1835	Rural Illusions.
Probably 1832	1835	To the Author's Portrait.
1832 and 1837	1837	Afterthought (Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820).

1833

1832 or 1833	1835	'Why art thou silent? Is thy love a plant?'
March 1833	1835	To ——, on the birth of her Firstborn Child.
1833	1835	The Warning. A Sequel to the foregoing.
7 April 1833	1835	On a high part of the coast of Cumberland.
1833	1835	A Wren's Nest.
1833	1835	By the Seaside ('The Sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest').
1833	1845	Composed by the Seashore ('What mischief').
1833	1835	Poems composed or suggested during a Tour in the Summer of 1833.
1833	1835	'If this great world of joy and pain.'
1833	1835	To the Utilitarians.
(?) 1833-1842	1842	Love Lies Bleeding.
(?) 1833-1842	1842	Companion to the foregoing.

1834

1834	1835	By the side of Rydal Mere.
1834	1835	'Not in the lucid intervals of life.'
1834	1835	'Soft as a cloud is yon blue Ridge—the Mere.'
1834	1835	'The leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill.'
1834	1835	The Labourer's Noon-day Hymn.
1834	1835	The Redbreast. (Suggested in a Westmoreland Cottage.)
5 Nov. 1834	1835	Lines written in the Album of the Countess of Lonsdale.
1834	1835	To a Child. Written in her Album.
1834	1835	Lines suggested by a Portrait from the Pencil of F. Stone.
1834	1835	The foregoing Subject resumed.

1835

Prob. before 1833	1835	The Somnambulist.
Prob. before 1835	1835	A Cento.
1835	1837	To the Moon. (Composed by the Seaside,—on the Coast of Cumberland.)
1835	1837	To the Moon (Rydal).
1835	1837	Upon seeing a coloured drawing of the Bird of Paradise.

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
Nov. 1835	12 Dec. 1835	Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg.
Nov. 1835	1837	Written after the Death of Charles Lamb.
Prob. before 1835	1835	'By a blest Husband guided, Mary came.'
Prob. before 1835	1835	'Desponding Father! mark this altered bough.'
Prob. before 1835	1835	Ecclesiastical Sonnets (Part II., Nos. iv., xii., xiii.).
Prob. before 1835	1835	'Four fiery steeds impatient of the rein.'
Prob. before 1835	1835	Roman Antiquities discovered at Bishopstone, Herefordshire.
Prob. before 1835	1835	St. Catherine of Ledbury.
Prob. before 1835	1835	To —— ('"Wait, prithee, wait!" this answer Lesbia threw').

1836

March 1836	1889	Squib.
1836	1889	Epigram.
Nov. 1836	1837	November 1836.
(?) 1836	1883	Translations of a Quatrain by Michelangelo, and from the Latin of T. Warton.

1837

1832 and 1837	1837	After-thought (Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820).
1837	1838	'Oh what a wreck! how changed in mien and speech.'
1837	1842	The Cuckoo at Laverna.
Probably 1837	1842	At Bologna, in remembrance of the late Insurrections, 1837. (Three Sonnets.)
(?) 1837	1842	The Widow of Windermere Side.
	1837	A Night Thought.
Prob. after 1834	1837	Ecclesiastical Sonnets (Part I., No. xxxii.).
?	1837	'O flower of all that springs from gentle blood.' (Epitaphs translated from Chiabrera, vii.).
?	1837	'True is it that Ambrosio Salinero' (Ep. from Chiabrera, v.).
?	1837	'Weep not, belovèd Friends! nor let the air' (Ep. from Chiabrera, I.).
?	1837	'Six months to six years added he remained.'
?	1837	'What if our numbers barely could defy.'

1838

Jan. 1838	1838	To the Planet Venus.
1 May 1838	1838	Composed at Rydal on May Morning, 1838.
1838	1838	Composed on a May Morning, 1838.
1838	1838	'Hark! 'tis the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest.'
1838	1838	''Tis He whose yester-evening's high disdain.'
May 1838	1838	A Plea for Authors, May 1838.
23 May 1838	1838	A Poet to his Grandchild. (Sequel to the foregoing.)
1838	1838	At Dover.
1838	1838	'Blest Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will.'
1838	1838	Protest against the Ballot.
1838	1838	'Said Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud.'
1838	1838	Valedictory Sonnet.
1838	1851	Inscription on a Rock at Rydal Mount.

1839

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
Finished 1839	1842	Thoughts suggested the Day following, on the Banks of Nith, near the Poet's Residence (See 'At the Grave of Burns, 1803').
1839	1842	'Men of the Western World! in Fate's dark book.'

1840

1839-1840	Dec. 1841	Sonnets upon the Punishment of Death.
1 Jan. 1840	1851	Sonnet on a Portrait of I. F., painted by Margaret Gillies.
Feb. 1840	1851	Sonnet to I. F.
March 1840	1842	Poor Robin.
31 Aug. 1840	1842	On a Portrait of the Duke of Wellington upon the Field of Waterloo, by Haydon.
1840	1842	To a Painter (Two Sonnets).

1841

		Memorials of a Tour in Italy. (See dates in text.)
1841	1842	Epitaph in the Chapel-yard at Langdale.
1841	1842	Upon perusing the foregoing Epistle (See 'Epistle to Sir G. H. Beaumont, 1811').

1842

23 Jan. 1842	1842	'When Severn's sweeping flood had overthrown.'
14 Feb. 1842	1842	To Henry Crabb Robinson.
8 March 1842	1842	'Intent on gathering wool from hedge and brake.'
26 March 1842	1842	Prelude, prefixed to the Volume entitled 'Poems chiefly of Early and Late Years.'
24 Dec. 1842	1845	'Wansfell! this Household has a favoured lot.'
Probably 1842	1842	The Eagle and the Dove.
1842	1842	Ecclesiastical Sonnets (Part II., Nos. ix., x. Part III., Nos. xiii., xiv., xv., xxvi., xxxi., and probably xxvii., xxviii., xxix., xxx.).
?	1842	Airey-Force Valley.
?	1842	The Norman Boy.
?	1842	The Poet's Dream. Sequel to 'The Norman Boy.'

1843

1 January 1843	1845	'While beams of orient light shoot wide and high.'
Before 27 Mar. 1843	1845	Grace Darling.
11 Dec. 1843	1845	To the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, D.D.
1843	1845	Inscription for a monument in Crosthwaite Church.

1844

July 1844	1845	'So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive.'
12 Oct. 1844	1844	On the projected Kendal and Windermere Railway.
1844	1844	'Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old.'

1845

COMPOSED	PUBLISHED	
Prob. Jan. or Feb. 1845	1845	To the Pennsylvanians.
Prob. Jan. or Feb. 1845	1845	'Young England—what is then become of Old.'
6 June 1845	1845	The Westmoreland Girl.
21 June 1845	1845	At Furness Abbey ('Well have yon Railway Labourers to THIS ground').
Probably 1845	1845	At Furness Abbey ('Here, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing').
1845	1845	'Forth from a jutting ridge, around whose base.'
(?) 1845	1845	'Glad sight wherever new with old.'
(?) 1845	1845	To a Lady, in answer to a request that I should write her a Poem, etc.
?	1845	'Yes! thou art fair, yet be not moved.'
?	1845	'What heavenly smiles! O Lady mine.'
?	1845	Ecclesiastical Sonnets (Part II., Nos. i., ii. Part III., xvi.).

1846

9 Jan. 1846	1889	Lines inscribed in a Copy of his Poems sent to the Queen.
1846	1850	'I know an aged Man constrained to dwell.'
1846	1850	Illustrated Books and Newspapers.
1846	1850	Sonnet. To an Octogenarian.
1846	1850	Sonnet ('Why should we weep or mourn, Angelic boy').
1846	1850	'The unremitting voice of mighty streams.'
1846	1850	To Lucca Giordano.
1846	1850	'Where lies the truth? Has Man, in wisdom's creed.'
1846	1850	'Who but is pleased to watch the moon on high.'

1847

1847	1847	Ode on the Installation of H.R.H. Prince Albert as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, July, 1847.

1850

Prob. not before 1846	1850	'How beautiful the Queen of Night, on high.'
Prob. not before 1846	1850	On the Banks of a Rocky Stream.

NOTE

THE first draft of the poem on the other side of this page was written, as Wordsworth tells us in the Fenwick note, some time after he settled at Rydal Mount (1813). It was first published, in 1827, among the *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection*, and consisted of eleven lines. In ed. 1836-7 l. 2 and ll. 14-16 were added; ll. 4, 5 were expanded from the original—'The Star that from the zenith darts its beams,' and the consequent changes from singular to plural were made in the following lines. The poem was moved to the front of the *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection*, on the *verso* of the title-page of that section. It was transferred to its present position in the one-volume ed. of 1845, Wordsworth writing to Moxon, 'I mean it to serve as a sort of Preface' (Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, iii. (vol. ix. of Edinburgh ed.), p. 414).

If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that Heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content:
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the Zenith dart their beams
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness),
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees;
All are the undying offspring of one Sire;
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.

POEMS BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Of the Poems in this class, 'The Evening Walk' and 'Descriptive Sketches' were first published in 1793. They are reprinted with some alterations that were chiefly made very soon after their publication.

. . . . . .

This notice, which was written some time ago, scarcely applies to the Poem, 'Descriptive Sketches,' as it now stands. The corrections, though numerous, are not, however, such as to prevent its retaining with propriety a place in the class of Juvenile Pieces.

1836

I

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED IN ANTICIPATION OF LEAVING SCHOOL

DEAR native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,
Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

1786

II

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal:

Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

Published 1802

III

AN EVENING WALK

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY

General Sketch of the Lakes—Author's regret of his Youth which was passed amongst them—Short description of Noon—Cascade—Noontide Retreat—Precipice and sloping Lights—Face of Nature as the Sun declines—Mountain-farm, and the Cock—Slate-quarry—Sunset—Superstition of the Country connected with that moment—Swans—Female Beggar—Twilight-sounds—Western Lights—Spirits—Night—Moonlight—Hope—Night-sounds—Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest Friend, 'tis mine to rove
Through bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds;
Where, undisturbed by winds, Winander[1] sleeps;
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled steeps;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

Fair scenes, erewhile, I taught, a happy child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild:
The spirit sought not then, in cherished sadness,
A cloudy substitute for failing gladness.
In youth's keen eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at night,

[1] These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.

Alike, when first the bittern's hollow bill
Was heard, or woodcocks[1] roamed the moonlight hill.

In thoughtless gaiety I coursed the plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain;
For then the inexperienced heart would beat
At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward, showed,
Through passes yet unreached, a brighter road.
Alas! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round;
Hope with reflection blends her social rays
To gild the total tablet of his days;
Yet still, the sport of some malignant power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.

But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,
Say, will my Friend, with unreluctant ear,
The history of a poet's evening hear?

When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill,
And shades of deep-embattled clouds were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between;
When crowding cattle, checked by rails that make
A fence far stretched into the shallow lake,
Lashed the cool water with their restless tails,
Or from high points of rock looked out for fanning gales;
When school-boys stretched their length upon the green;
And round the broad-spread oak, a glimmering scene,
In the rough fern-clad park, the herded deer
Shook the still-twinkling tail and glancing ear;
When horses in the sunburnt intake[2] stood,
And vainly eyed below the tempting flood,
Or tracked the passenger, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press—
Then, while I wandered where the huddling rill
Brightens with water-breaks the hollow ghyll,[3]
As by enchantment, an obscure retreat
Opened at once, and stayed my devious feet.
While thick above the rill the branches close,
In rocky basin its wild waves repose,

[1] In the beginning of winter, these mountains are frequented by woodcocks, which in dark nights retire into the woods.
[2] The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain-inclosure.
[3] Ghyll is also, I believe, a term confined to this country: ghyll, and dingle, have the same meaning.

Inverted shrubs, and moss of gloomy green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between;
And its own twilight softens the whole scene,
Save where aloft the subtle sunbeams shine
On withered briars that o'er the crags recline;
Save where, with sparkling foam, a small cascade
Illumines, from within, the leafy shade;
Beyond, along the vista of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling course o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge,[1]
Half grey, half shagged with ivy to its ridge;
There, bending o'er the stream, the listless swain
Lingers behind his disappearing wain.
—Did Sabine grace adorn my living line,
Blandusia's praise, wild stream, should yield to thine!
Never shall ruthless minister of death
'Mid thy soft glooms the glittering steel unsheath;
No goblets shall, for thee, be crowned with flowers,
No kid with piteous outcry thrill thy bowers;
The mystic shapes that by thy margin rove
A more benignant sacrifice approve—
A mind that, in a calm angelic mood
Of happy wisdom, meditating good,
Beholds, of all from her high powers required,
Much done, and much designed, and more desired,—
Harmonious thoughts, a soul by truth refined,
Entire affection for all human kind.

Dear Brook, farewell! To-morrow's noon again
Shall hide me, wooing long thy wildwood strain;
But now the sun has gained his western road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silvered kite
In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
Slant watery lights, from parting clouds, apace
Travel along the precipice's base;
Cheering its naked waste of scattered stone,
By lichens grey, and scanty moss, o'ergrown;
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or thistle's beard;
And restless stone-chat, all day long, is heard.

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view
The spacious landscape change in form and hue!

[1] The reader, who has made the tour of this country, will recognise in this description the features which characterise the lower waterfall in the grounds of Rydal.

Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood;
There, objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
Come forth, and here retire in purple shade;
Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,
Soften their glare before the mellow light;
The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage wide
Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-house hide,
Shed from their sides, that face the sun's slant beam,
Strong flakes of radiance on the tremulous stream:
Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty cloud
Mounts from the road, and spreads its moving shroud;
The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is lost entire.

Into a gradual calm the breezes sink,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still brink;
There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage sleep,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deep:
And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light;
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray;
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror glows,
Save where, along the shady western marge,
Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal barge.

Their panniered train a group of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge;
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse illume
Feeding 'mid purple heath, 'green rings,'[1] and broom;
While the sharp slope the slackened team confounds,
Downward the ponderous timber-wain resounds;
In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
Dashed o'er the rough rock, lightly leaps along;
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet
Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
Sounds from the water-side the hammered boat;
And *blasted* quarry thunders, heard remote!

Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and falling floods,

[1] 'Vivid rings of green.'—Greenwood's Poem on Shooting.

Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the grassy door of mountain-farms.

Sweetly ferocious,[1] round his native walks,
Pride of his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;
Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread;
A crest of purple tops the warrior's head.
Bright sparks his black and rolling eyeball hurls
Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
On tiptoe reared, he strains his clarion throat,
Threatened by faintly-answering farms remote:
Again with his shrill voice the mountain rings,
While, flapped with conscious pride, resound his wings!

Where, mixed with graceful birch, the sombrous pine
And yew-tree o'er the silver rocks recline,
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf panniered steeds, and men, and numerous wains:
How busy all the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with its various din!
Some (hear you not their chisels' clinking sound?)
Toil, small as pigmies in the gulf profound;
Some, dim between the lofty cliffs descried,
O'erwalk the slender plank from side to side;
These, by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring,
In airy baskets hanging, work and sing.

Just where a cloud above the mountain rears
An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
And now that orb has touched the purple steep,
Whose softened image penetrates the deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a 'prospect all on fire';
While coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
Each slip of lawn the broken rocks between
Shines in the light with more than earthly green:
Deep yellow beams the scattered stems illume,
Far in the level forest's central gloom:
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,—
The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks.

[1] 'Dolcemente feroce.'—Tasso.—In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in *L'Agriculture, ou Les Géorgiques Françoises*, of M. Rossuet.

Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots;
The druid-stones a brightened ring unfold;
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,
Gives one bright glance, and drops behind the hill.[1]

In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may claim;
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the shepherd's sight.

The form appears of one that spurs his steed
Midway along the hill with desperate speed;
Unhurt pursues his lengthened flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, appears a brave, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro;
At intervals imperial banners stream,
And now the van reflects the solar beam;
The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam.
While silent stands the admiring crowd below,
Silent the visionary warriors go,
Winding in ordered pomp their upward way,[2]
Till the last banner of their long array
Has disappeared, and every trace has fled
Of splendour—save the beacon's spiry head
Tipt with eve's latest gleam of burning red.

Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On slowly-waving pinions, down the vale;
And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves in stronger lines;
'Tis pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray
Where, winding on along some secret bay,
The swan uplifts his chest, and backward flings
His neck, a varying arch, between his towering wings:
The eye that marks the gliding creature sees
How graceful, pride can be, and how majestic, ease.
While tender cares and mild domestic loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves,
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little-ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.

[1] From Thomson.

[2] See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's *Survey of the Lakes*, accompanied by vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader.

She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgetting, calls the wearied to her side;
Alternately they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.

Long may they float upon this flood serene;
Theirs be these holms untrodden, still, and green,
Where leafy shades fence off the blustering gale,
And breathes in peace the lily of the vale!
Yon isle, which feels not even the milkmaid's feet,
Yet hears her song, 'by distance made more sweet,'
Yon isle conceals their home, their hut-like bower;
Green water-rushes overspread the floor;
Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
Thence issuing often with unwieldy stalk,
They crush with broad black feet their flowery walk;
Or, from the neighbouring water, hear at morn
The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn;
Involve their serpent-necks in changeful rings,
Rolled wantonly between their slippery wings,
Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
Force half upon the wave their cumbrous flight.

Fair Swan! by all a mother's joys caressed,
Haply some wretch has eyed, and called thee blessed;
When with her infants, from some shady seat
By the lake's edge, she rose—to face the noontide heat;
Or taught their limbs along the dusty road
A few short steps to totter with their load.

I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to the gliding moon on high.
—When low-hung clouds each star of summer hide,
And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
Where the brook brawls along the public road
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
Oft has she taught them on her lap to lay
The shining glow-worm; or, in heedless play,
Toss it from hand to hand, disquieted;
While others, not unseen, are free to shed
Green unmolested light upon their mossy bed.

Oh! when the sleety showers her path assail,
And like a torrent roars the headstrong gale;

No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold;
Weak roof a cowering form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield!
Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears;
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, coffined in thine arms!

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.

Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn colouring of night;
'Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
And round the west's proud lodge their shadows throw,
Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray;
Shedding, through paly loop-holes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom fall;
Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres pale
Tracking the motions of the fitful gale.
With restless interchange at once the bright
Wins on the shade, the shade upon the light.
No favoured eye was e'er allowed to gaze
On lovelier spectacle in faery days;
When gentle Spirits urged a sportive chase,
Brushing with lucid wands the water's face;
While music, stealing round the glimmering deeps,
Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted steeps.
—The lights are vanished from the watery plains:
No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheeded night has overcome the vales:
On the dark earth the wearied vision fails;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,
Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar;
And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain-steeps appear.
—Now o'er the soothed accordant heart we feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,

And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.
Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay!
Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade away:
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains;
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.

The bird, who ceased, with fading light, to thread
Silent the hedge or steamy rivulet's bed,
From his grey re-appearing tower shall soon
Salute with gladsome note the rising moon,
While with a hoary light she frosts the ground,
And pours a deeper blue to Æther's bound;
Pleased, as she moves, her pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.

Above yon eastern hill, where darkness broods
O'er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and woods;
Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
Even now she shows, half-veiled, her lovely face:
Across the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets white;
And gives, where woods the chequered upland strew,
To the green corn of summer, autumn's hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the moon's own morn,
'Till higher mounted, strives in vain to cheer
The weary hills, impervious, blackening near;
Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
On darling spots remote her tempting smile.

Even now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulf of time between)
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way;
How fair its lawns and sheltering woods appear!
How sweet its streamlet murmurs in mine ear!)
Where we, my Friend, to happy days shall rise,
'Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hushed into the tranquil breast of death.

But now the clear bright Moon her zenith gains,
And, rimy without speck, extend the plains:
The deepest cleft the mountain's front displays
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays;

From the dark-blue faint silvery threads divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure tide;
Time softly treads; throughout the landscape breathes
A peace enlivened, not disturbed, by wreaths
Of charcoal-smoke, that, o'er the fallen wood,
Steal down the hill, and spread along the flood.

The song of mountain-streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
Air listens, like the sleeping water, still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferryman from sleep,
The echoed hoof nearing the distant shore,
The boat's first motion—made with dashing oar;
Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the timid hare through rustling corn;
The sportive outcry of the mocking owl;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound;
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

1787-1789

IV

LINES

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING

HOW richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues!
And see how dark the backward stream!
A little moment past so smiling!
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterers beguiling.

Such views the youthful Bard allure;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow?

1789

V

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR RICHMOND

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.
O glide, fair stream! for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought!—Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the Poet bless,
Who, murmuring here a later[1] ditty,
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For *him* suspend the dashing oar;
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.
How calm! how still! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended!
—The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

1789

VI

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

TAKEN DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR AMONG THE ALPS

TO THE REV. ROBERT JONES

FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

DEAR SIR,—However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of our having been companions

[1] Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his life-time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

among the Alps seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you, I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious that I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together; consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets, which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgelert, Menai and her Druids, the Alpine steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee, remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem I am, dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

London, 1793 W. WORDSWORTH

Happiness (if she had been to be found on earth) among the charms of Nature—Pleasures of the pedestrian traveller—Author crosses France to the Alps—Present state of the Grande Chartreuse—Lake of Como—Time, Sunset—Same Scene, Twilight—Same Scene, Morning; its voluptuous Character; Old man and forest-cottage music—River Tusa—Via Mala and Grison Gipsy—Sckellenen-thal—Lake of Uri—Stormy sunset—Chapel of William Tell—Force of local emotion—Chamois-chaser—View of the higher Alps—Manner of life of a Swiss mountaineer, interspersed with views of the higher Alps—Golden age of the Alps—Life and views continued—Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air—Abbey of Einsiedlen and its pilgrims—Valley of Chamouny—Mont Blanc—Slavery of Savoy—Influence of liberty on cottage-happiness—France—Wish for the Extirpation of Slavery—Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground
Where from distress a refuge might be found,
And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
Sure, nature's God that spot to man had given
Where falls the purple morning far and wide
In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;
Where with loud voice the power of water shakes
The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
Who at the call of summer quits his home,
And plods through some wide realm o'er vale and height,
Though seeking only holiday delight;
At least, not owning to himself an aim
To which the sage would give a prouder name.
No gains too cheaply earned his fancy cloy,
Though every passing zephyr whispers joy;
Brisk toil, alternating with ready ease,
Feeds the clear current of his sympathies.
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn;
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the velvet green-sward to his tread:
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye?
Upward he looks—'and calls it luxury':
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend;
In every babbling brook he finds a friend;
While chastening thoughts of sweetest use, bestowed
By wisdom, moralise his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide bower,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
He views the sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's lyre;[1]
Blesses the moon that comes with kindly ray,
To light him shaken by his rugged way.
Back from his sight no bashful children steal;
He sits a brother at the cottage-meal;
His humble looks no shy restraint impart;
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with inquiring glance,
Much wondering by what fit of crazing care,
Or desperate love, bewildered, he came there.

A hope, that prudence could not then approve,
That clung to Nature with a truant's love,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn my footsteps led;
Her files of road-elms, high above my head
In long-drawn vista, rustling in the breeze;
Or where her pathways straggle as they please
By lonely farms and secret villages.
But lo! the Alps, ascending white in air,
Toy with the sun and glitter from afar.

[1] The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

And now, emerging from the forest's gloom,
I greet thee, Chartreuse, while I mourn thy doom.
Whither is fled that Power whose frown severe
Awed sober Reason till she crouched in fear?
That Silence, once in deathlike fetters bound,
Chains that were loosened only by the sound
Of holy rites chanted in measured round?
—The voice of blasphemy the fane alarms,
The cloister startles at the gleam of arms.
The thundering tube the aged angler hears,
Bent o'er the groaning flood that sweeps away his tears.
Cloud-piercing pine-trees nod their troubled heads,
Spires, rocks, and lawns a browner night o'erspreads;
Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start the astonished shades at female eyes.
From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
A viewless flight of laughing Demons mock
The Cross, by Angels planted[1] on the aerial rock.
The 'parting Genius' sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and Death.[2]
Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous through her old woods' trackless bounds,
Vallombre,[3] 'mid her falling fanes, deplores,
For ever broke, the sabbath of her bowers.

More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosomed deep in chestnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
—To towns, whose shades of no rude noise complain,
From ringing team apart and grating wain—
To flat-roofed towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whitened wave their shadows fling—
The pathway leads, as round the steeps it twines;
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The loitering traveller hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades;
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
Stretch o'er the pictured mirror broad and blue,

[1] Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.
[2] Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.
[3] Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse.

And track the yellow lights from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills they slowly creep.
Aloft, here, half a village shines, arrayed
In golden light; half hides itself in shade:
While, from amid the darkened roofs, the spire,
Restlessly flashing, seems to mount like fire:
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the lake below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar;
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And amorous music on the water dies.

How blest, delicious scene! the eye that greets
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;
Beholds the unwearied sweep of wood that scales
Thy cliffs; the endless waters of thy vales;
Thy lowly cots that sprinkle all the shore,
Each with its household boat beside the door;
Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky;
Thy towns that cleave, like swallows' nests, on high;
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descried
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods;
—Thy lake that, streaked or dappled, blue or grey,
'Mid smoking woods gleams hid from morning's ray
Slow-travelling down the western hills, to enfold
Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold;
Thy glittering steeples, whence the matin bell
Calls forth the woodman from his desert cell,
And quickens the blithe sound of oars that pass
Along the steaming lake, to early mass.
But now farewell to each and all—adieu
To every charm, and last and chief to you,
Ye lovely maidens that in noontide shade
Rest near your little plots of wheaten glade;
To all that binds the soul in powerless trance,
Lip-dewing song, and ringlet-tossing dance;
Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illume
The sylvan cabin's lute-enlivened gloom.
—Alas! the very murmur of the streams
Breathes o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams,
While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
Her shameless timbrel shakes on Como's marge,
And lures from bay to bay the vocal barge.

Yet are thy softer arts with power indued
To soothe and cheer the poor man's solitude.
By silent cottage doors, the peasant's home
Left vacant for the day, I love to roam.
But once I pierced the mazes of a wood
In which a cabin undeserted stood;
There an old man an olden measure scanned
On a rude viol touched with withered hand.
As lambs or fawns in April clustering lie
Under a hoary oak's thin canopy,
Stretched at his feet, with steadfast upward eye,
His children's children listened to the sound;
—A Hermit with his family around!

But let us hence; for fair Locarno smiles
Embowered in walnut slopes and citron isles:
Or seek at eve the banks of Tusa's stream,[1]
Where, 'mid dim towers and woods, her waters gleam.
From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and, darkening still, aspire
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguished clouds, and rocks, and snow:
Or, led where Via Mala's chasms confine
The indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
Hang o'er the abyss, whose else impervious gloom
His burning eyes with fearful light illume.

The mind condemned, without reprieve, to go
O'er life's long deserts with its charge of woe,
With sad congratulation joins the train
Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
Move on—a mighty caravan of pain:
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
Freshening the wilderness with shades and springs.
—There be whose lot far otherwise is cast:
Sole human tenant of the piny waste,
By choice or doom a gipsy wanders here,
A nursling babe her only comforter;
Lo, where she sits beneath yon shaggy rock,
A cowering shape half hid in curling smoke!

When lightning among clouds and mountain-snows
Predominates, and darkness comes and goes,
And the fierce torrent at the flashes broad
Starts, like a horse, beside the glaring road—
She seeks a covert from the battering shower

[1] The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Simplon Pass.

In the roofed bridge;[1] the bridge, in that dread hour,
Itself all trembling at the torrent's power.

Nor is she more at ease on some *still* night,
When not a star supplies the comfort of its light;
Only the waning moon hangs dull and red
Above a melancholy mountain's head,
Then sets. In total gloom the Vagrant sighs,
Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes;
Or on her fingers counts the distant clock,
Or to the drowsy crow of midnight cock
Listens, or quakes while from the forest's gulf
Howls near and nearer yet the famished wolf.

From the green vale of Urseren smooth and wide
Descend we now, the maddened Reuss our guide;
By rocks that, shutting out the blessed day,
Cling tremblingly to rocks as loose as they;
By cells[2] upon whose image, while he prays,
The kneeling peasant scarcely dares to gaze;
By many a votive death-cross[3] planted near,
And watered duly with the pious tear,
That faded silent from the upward eye
Unmoved with each rude form of peril nigh;
Fixed on the anchor left by Him who saves
Alike in whelming snows and roaring waves.

But soon a peopled region on the sight
Opens—a little world of calm delight;
Where mists, suspended on the expiring gale,
Spread rooflike o'er the deep secluded vale,
And beams of evening, slipping in between,
Gently illuminate a sober scene:—
Here, on the brown wood-cottages[4] they sleep,
There, over rock or sloping pasture creep.
On as we journey, in clear view displayed,
The still vale lengthens underneath its shade
Of low-hung vapour: on the freshened mead
The green light sparkles;—the dim bowers recede.
While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,

[1] Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood, and covered: these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

[2] The Catholic religion prevails here: these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the road side.

[3] Crosses, commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow, and other accidents, are very common along this dreadful road.

[4] The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

In solemn shapes before the admiring eye
Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,
And antique castles seen through gleamy showers.

From such romantic dreams, my soul, awake!
To sterner pleasure, where, by Uri's lake
In Nature's pristine majesty outspread,
Winds neither road nor path for foot to tread:
The rocks rise naked as a wall, or stretch
Far o'er the water, hung with groves of beech;
Aerial pines from loftier steeps ascend,
Nor stop but where creation seems to end.
Yet here and there, if 'mid the savage scene
Appears a scanty plot of smiling green,
Up from the lake a zigzag path will creep
To reach a small wood-hut hung boldly on the steep.
—Before those thresholds (never can they know
The face of traveller passing to and fro,)
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning tolled the funeral bell;
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark forgoes,
Touched by the beggar's moan of human woes;
The shady porch ne'er offered a cool seat
To pilgrims overcome by summer's heat.
Yet thither the world's business finds its way
At times, and tales unsought beguile the day,
And *there* are those fond thoughts which Solitude,
However stern, is powerless to exclude.
There doth the maiden watch her lover's sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale;
At midnight listens till his parting oar,
And its last echo, can be heard no more.

And what if ospreys, cormorants, herons cry,
Amid tempestuous vapours driving by,
Or hovering over wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the foodful ear;
Where the green apple shrivels on the spray,
And pines the unripened pear in summer's kindliest ray;
Contentment shares the desolate domain
With Independence, child of high Disdain.
Exulting 'mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And grasps by fits her sword, and often eyes;
And sometimes, as from rock to rock she bounds,
The Patriot nymph starts at imagined sounds,

And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
Whether some old Swiss air hath checked her haste,
Or thrill of Spartan fife is caught between the blast.

Swoln with incessant rains from hour to hour,
All day the floods a deepening murmur pour:
The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight:
Dark is the region as with coming night;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering light!
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the wheeling eagle's glorious form!
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lakes recline;
Those lofty cliffs a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turned that flame with gold:
Behind his sail the peasant shrinks, to shun
The *west*, that burns like one dilated sun,
A crucible of mighty compass, felt
By mountains, glowing till they seem to melt.

But, lo! the boatman, overawed, before
The pictured fane of Tell suspends his oar;
Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While his eyes sparkle with heroic tears.
And who, that walks where men of ancient days
Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds of praise,
Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Or rouse and agitate his labouring soul?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lulled by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain, or on that highland dell,
Through which rough Garry cleaves his way, can tell
What high resolves exalt the tenderest thought
Of him whom passion rivets to the spot,
Where breathed the gale that caught Wolfe's happiest sigh,
And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard's eye;
Where bleeding Sidney from the cup retired,
And glad Dundee in 'faint huzzas' expired?

But now with other mind I stand alone
Upon the summit of this naked cone,
And watch the fearless chamois-hunter chase
His prey, through tracts abrupt of desolate space,
[1] Through vacant worlds where Nature never gave
A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,

[1] For most of the images in the next sixteen verses, I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's *Tour in Switzerland.*

Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep;
Thro' worlds where Life, and Voice, and Motion sleep;
Where silent Hours their death-like sway extend,
Save when the avalanche breaks loose, to rend
Its way with uproar, till the ruin, drowned
In some dense wood or gulf of snow profound,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound.
—'Tis his, while wandering on from height to height,
To see a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night;
While the pale moon moves near him, on the bound
Of ether, shining with diminished round,
And far and wide the icy summits blaze,
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays:
To him the day-star glitters small and bright,
Shorn of its beams, insufferably white,
And he can look beyond the sun, and view
Those fast-receding depths of sable blue
Flying till vision can no more pursue!
—At once bewildering mists around him close,
And cold and hunger are his least of woes;
The Demon of the snow, with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Soon with despair's whole weight his spirits sink;
Bread has he none, the snow must be his drink;
And, ere his eyes can close upon the day,
The eagle of the Alps o'ershades her prey.

Now couch thyself where, heard with fear afar,
Thunders through echoing pines the headlong Aar;
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Underwalden's[1] pastoral heights.
—Is there who 'mid these awful wilds has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain green?
Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal,
Soft music o'er the aerial summit steal?
While o'er the desert, answering every close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
—And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Nought but the *chalets*,[2] flat and bare, on high
Suspended 'mid the quiet of the sky;

[1] The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps; this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

[2] This picture is from the middle region of the Alps. *Chalets* are summer huts for the Swiss herdsmen.

Or distant herds that pasturing upward creep,
And, not untended, climb the dangerous steep.
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouses the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
And with that voice accords the soothing sound
Of drowsy bells, for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-wood's steady *sugh*;[1]
The solitary heifer's deepened low;
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling snow.
All motions, sounds, and voices, far and nigh,
Blend in a music of tranquillity;
Save when, a stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

When, from the sunny breast of open seas,
And bays with myrtle fringed, the southern breeze
Comes on to gladden April with the sight
Of green isles widening on each snow-clad height;
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,
The pastoral Swiss begin the cliffs to scale,
Leaving to silence the deserted vale;
And, like the Patriarchs in their simple age,
Move, as the verdure leads, from stage to stage;
High and more high in summer's heat they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below;
Or steal beneath the mountains, half-deterred,
Where huge rocks tremble to the bellowing herd.

One I behold who, 'cross the foaming flood,
Leaps with a bound of graceful hardihood;
Another high on that green ledge;—he gained
The tempting spot with every sinew strained;
And downward thence a knot of grass he throws,
Food for his beasts in time of winter snows.
—Far different life from what Tradition hoar
Transmits of happier lot in times of yore!
Then Summer lingered long; and honey flowed
From out the rocks, the wild bees' safe abode;
Continual waters welling cheered the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste:

[1] Sugh, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had piled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage smiled:
Nor Hunger driven the herds from pastures bare,
To climb the treacherous cliffs for scanty fare.
Then the milk-thistle flourished through the land,
And forced the full-swoln udder to demand,
Thrice every day, the pail and welcome hand.
Thus does the father to his children tell
Of banished bliss, by fancy loved too well.
Alas! that human guilt provoked the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.

'Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain glows;
More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
Far stretched beneath the many-tinted hills,
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea! whose billows wide around
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound:
Pines, on the coast, through mist their tops uprear,
That like to leaning masts of stranded ships appear.
A single chasm, a gulf of gloomy blue,
Gapes in the centre of the sea—and, through
That dark mysterious gulf ascending, sound
Innumerable streams with roar profound.
Mount through the nearer vapours notes of birds,
And merry flageolet; the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the heifer's tinkling bell,
Talk, laughter, and perchance a church-tower knell:
Think not the peasant from aloft has gazed
And heard with heart unmoved, with soul unraised:
Nor is his spirit less enrapt, nor less
Alive to independent happiness,
Then, when he lies, outstretched, at even-tide
Upon the fragrant mountain's purple side:
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley seldom stray,
Nought round its darling precincts can he find
But brings some past enjoyment to his mind;
While Hope, reclining upon Pleasure's urn,
Binds her wild wreaths, and whispers his return.

Once, Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was blest as free—for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining, and by none restrained:

Confessed no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wished, and wished but what he ought.
As man in his primeval dower arrayed
The image of his glorious Sire displayed,
Even so, by faithful Nature guarded, here
The traces of primeval Man appear;
The simple dignity no forms debase;
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace:
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
His book he prizes, nor neglects his sword;
—Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepared
With this 'the blessings he enjoys to guard.'

And, as his native hills encircle ground
For many a marvellous victory renowned,
The work of Freedom daring to oppose,
With few in arms,[1] innumerable foes,
When to those famous fields his steps are led,
An unknown power connects him with the dead:
For images of other worlds are there;
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Fitfully, and in flashes, through his soul,
Like sun-lit tempests, troubled transports roll;
His bosom heaves, his Spirit towers amain,
Beyond the senses and their little reign.

And oft, when that dread vision hath past by,
He holds with God himself communion high,
There where the peal of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills;
Or, when upon the mountain's silent brow
Reclined, he sees, above him and below,
Bright stars of ice and azure fields of snow;
While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air.
And when a gathering weight of shadows brown
Falls on the valleys as the sun goes down;
And Pikes, of darkness named and fear and storms,[2]
Uplift in quiet their illumined forms,

[1] Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria; and, in particular, to one fought at Næffels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men are said to have defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out, as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians, attempting to make a stand, were repulsed anew.

[2] As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror; Wetter-Horn, the pike of storms, etc. etc.

In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Tinged like an angel's smile all rosy red—
Awe in his breast with holiest love unites,
And the near heavens impart their own delights.

When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows;
That hut which on the hills so oft employs
His thoughts, the central point of all his joys.
And as a swallow, at the hour of rest,
Peeps often ere she darts into her nest,
So to the homestead, where the grandsire tends
A little prattling child, he oft descends,
To glance a look upon the well-matched pair;
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there.
There, safely guarded by the woods behind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter calling all his terrors round,
And, blest within himself, he shrinks not from the sound.

Through Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide,
Unstained by envy, discontent, and pride;
The bound of all his vanity, to deck,
With one bright bell a favourite heifer's neck;
Well pleased upon some simple annual feast,
Remembered half the year and hoped the rest,
If dairy-produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers dignify the board.
—Alas! in every clime a flying ray
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way;
And here the unwilling mind may more than trace
The general sorrows of the human race:
The churlish gales of penury, that blow
Cold as the north-wind o'er a waste of snow,
To them the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
Yet more;—compelled by Powers which only deign
That *solitary* man disturb their reign,
Powers that support an unremitting strife
With all the tender charities of life,
Full oft the father, when his sons have grown
To manhood, seems their title to disown;
And from his nest amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, those sons as he was driven;
With stern composure watches to the plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again!

When long familiar joys are all resigned,
Why does their sad remembrance haunt the mind?
Lo! where through flat Batavia's willowy groves,
Or by the lazy Seine, the exile roves;
O'er the curled waters Alpine measures swell,
And search the affections to their inmost cell;
Sweet poison spreads along the listener's veins,
Turning past pleasures into mortal pains;
Poison, which not a frame of steel can brave,
Bows his young head with sorrow to the grave.[1]

Gay lark of hope, thy silent song resume!
Ye flattering eastern lights, once more the hills illume!
Fresh gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return!
Alas! the little joy to man allowed
Fades like the lustre of an evening cloud;
Or like the beauty in a flower installed,
Whose season was, and cannot be recalled.
Yet when oppress by sickness, grief, or care,
And taught that pain is pleasure's natural heir,
We still confide in more than we can know;
Death would be else the favourite friend of woe.

'Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow that shine,
Between interminable tracts of pine,
Within a temple stands an awful shrine,
By an uncertain light revealed, that falls
On the mute Image and the troubled walls.
Oh! give not me that eye of hard disdain
That views, undimmed, Einsiedlen's[2] wretched fane.
While ghastly faces through the gloom appear,
Abortive joy, and hope that works in fear;
While prayer contends with silenced agony,
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope—oh, pass and leave it there!

The tall sun, pausing on an Alpine spire,
Flings o'er the wilderness a stream of fire:
Now meet we other pilgrims ere the day
Close on the remnant of their weary way;
While they are drawing toward the sacred floor
Where, so they fondly think, the worm shall gnaw no more.

[1] The well-known effect of the famous air, called in French Ranz des Vaches, upon the Swiss troops.

[2] This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

How gaily murmur and how sweetly taste
The fountains[1] reared for them amid the waste!
Their thirst they slake:—they wash their toil-worn feet,
And some with tears of joy each other greet.
Yes, I must see you when ye first behold
Those holy turrets tipped with evening gold,
In that glad moment will for you a sigh
Be heaved, of charitable sympathy;
In that glad moment when your hands are prest
In mute devotion on the thankful breast!

Last, let us turn to Chamouny that shields
With rocks and gloomy woods her fertile fields:
Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend;—
A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
Of purple lights and ever-vernal plains;
Here all the seasons revel hand in hand:
'Mid lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fanned,
They sport beneath that mountain's matchless height
That holds no commerce with the summer night.
From age to age, throughout his lonely bounds
The crash of ruin fitfully resounds;
Appalling havoc! but serene his brow,
Where daylight lingers on perpetual snow;
Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.

What marvel then if many a Wanderer sigh,
While roars the sullen Arve in anger by,
That not for thy reward, unrivall'd Vale!
Waves the ripe harvest in the autumnal gale;
That thou, the slave of slaves, art doomed to pine
And droop, while no Italian arts are thine,
To soothe or cheer, to soften or refine.

Hail Freedom! whether it was mine to stray,
With shrill winds whistling round my lonely way,
On the bleak sides of Cumbria's heath-clad moors,
Or where dank sea-weed lashes Scotland's shores;
To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;
Still have I found, where Tyranny prevails,
That virtue languishes and pleasure fails,
While the remotest hamlets blessings share
In thy loved presence known, and only there;

[1] Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the Pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain.

Heart-blessings—outward treasures too which the eye
Of the sun peeping through the clouds can spy,
And every passing breeze will testify.
There, to the porch, belike with jasmine bound
Or woodbine wreaths, a smoother path is wound;
The housewife there a brighter garden sees,
Where hum on busier wing her happy bees;
On infant cheeks there fresher roses blow;
And grey-haired men look up with livelier brow,—
To greet the traveller needing food and rest;
Housed for the night, or but a half-hour's guest.

And oh, fair France! though now the traveller sees
Thy three-striped banner fluctuate on the breeze;
Though martial songs have banished songs of love,
And nightingales desert the village grove,
Scared by the fife and rumbling drum's alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of arms;
That cease not till night falls, when far and nigh,
Sole sound, the Sourd[1] prolongs his mournful cry;
—Yet hast thou found that Freedom spreads her power
Beyond the cottage-hearth, the cottage-door:
All nature smiles, and owns beneath her eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
Yes, as I roamed where Loiret's waters glide
Through rustling aspens heard from side to side,
When from October clouds a milder light
Fell where the blue flood rippled into white;
Methought from every cot the watchful bird
Crowed with ear-piercing power till then unheard;
Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
Rocked the charmed thought in more delightful dreams;
Chasing those pleasant dreams, the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter sense of moral grief;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Wound in more welcome cadence down the vale;
With more majestic course[2] the water rolled,
And ripening foliage shone with richer gold.
—But foes are gathering—Liberty must raise
Red on the hills her Beacon's far-seen blaze;
Must bid the tocsin ring from tower to tower!—
Nearer and nearer comes the trying hour!

[1] An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.

[2] The duties upon many parts of the French rivers were so exorbitant, that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water-carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

Rejoice, brave Land, though pride's perverted ire
Rouse hell's own aid, and wrap thy fields in fire:
Lo, from the flames a great and glorious birth;
As if a new-made heaven were hailing a new earth!
—All cannot be: the promise is too fair
For creatures doomed to breathe terrestrial air:
Yet not for this will sober reason frown
Upon that promise, nor the hope disown;
She knows that only from high aims ensue
Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due.

Great God! by whom the strifes of men are weighed
In an impartial balance, give thine aid
To the just cause; and, oh! do thou preside
Over the mighty stream now spreading wide:
So shall its waters, from the heavens supplied
In copious showers, from earth by wholesome springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with Nile-like wings!
And grant that every sceptred child of clay
Who cries presumptuous, 'Here the flood shall stay,'
May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
And cease the acknowledged purpose to withstand;
Or, swept in anger from the insulted shore,
Sink with his servile bands, to rise no more!

To-night, my Friend, within this humble cot
Be scorn and fear and hope alike forgot
In timely sleep; and when, at break of day,
On the tall peaks the glistening sunbeams play,
With a light heart our course we may renew,
The first whose footsteps print the mountain dew.

1791-1792

VII

LINES

Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore, commanding a beautiful prospect.

NAY, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

———Who he was
That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favoured Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper:
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor, that time,
When nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds
Warm from the labours of benevolence
The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost Man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died,—this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties

Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

Begun before Oct. 1787, finished 1795

VIII

GUILT AND SORROW

OR, INCIDENTS UPON SALISBURY PLAIN

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS POEM, PUBLISHED IN 1842

Not less than one-third of the following poem, though it has from time to time been altered in the expression, was published so far back as the year 1798, under the title of 'The Female Vagrant.' The extract is of such length that an apology seems to be required for reprinting it here: but it was necessary to restore it to its original position, or the rest would have been unintelligible. The whole was written before the close of the year 1794, and I will detail, rather as matter of literary biography than for any other reason, the circumstances under which it was produced.

During the latter part of the summer of 1793, having passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy forebodings. The American war was still fresh in memory. The struggle which was beginning, and which many thought would be brought to a speedy close by the irresistible arms of Great Britain being added to those of the Allies, I was assured in my own mind would be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation. This conviction was pressed upon me by having been a witness, during a long residence in revolutionary France, of the spirit which prevailed in that country. After leaving the Isle of Wight, I spent two days in wandering on foot over Salisbury Plain, which, though cultivation was then widely spread through parts of it, had upon the whole a still more impressive appearance than it now retains.

The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in abundance over that region, led me unavoidably to compare what we know or guess of those remote times with certain aspects of modern society, and with calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to

which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject. In those reflections, joined with particular facts that had come to my knowledge, the following stanzas originated.

In conclusion, to obviate some distraction in the minds of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it may be proper to say that, of the features described as belonging to it, one or two are taken from other desolate parts of England.

I

A TRAVELLER on the skirt of Sarum's Plain
Pursued his vagrant way, with feet half bare;
Stooping his gait, but not as if to gain
Help from the staff he bore; for mien and air
Were hardy, though his cheek seemed worn with care
Both of the time to come, and time long fled:
Down fell in straggling locks his thin grey hair;
A coat he wore of military red
But faded, and stuck o'er with many a patch and shred.

II

While thus he journeyed, step by step led on,
He saw and passed a stately inn, full sure
That welcome in such house for him was none.
No board inscribed the needy to allure
Hung there, no bush proclaimed to old and poor
And desolate, 'Here you will find a friend!'
The pendent grapes glittered above the door;—
On he must pace, perchance till night descend,
Where'er the dreary roads their bare white lines extend.

III

The gathering clouds grew red with stormy fire,
In streaks diverging wide and mounting high;
That inn he long had passed; the distant spire,
Which oft as he looked back had fixed his eye,
Was lost, though still he looked, in the blank sky.
Perplexed and comfortless he gazed around,
And scarce could any trace of man descry,
Save cornfields stretched and stretching without bound;
But where the sower dwelt was nowhere to be found.

IV

No tree was there, no meadow's pleasant green,
No brook to wet his lip or soothe his ear;

Long files of corn-stacks here and there were seen,
But not one dwelling-place his heart to cheer.
Some labourer, thought he, may perchance be near;
And so he sent a feeble shout—in vain;
No voice made answer, he could only hear
Winds rustling over plots of unripe grain,
Or whistling thro' thin grass along the unfurrowed plain.

V

Long had he fancied each successive slope
Concealed some cottage, whither he might turn
And rest; but now along heaven's darkening cope
The crows rushed by in eddies, homeward borne.
Thus warned he sought some shepherd's spreading thorn
Or hovel from the storm to shield his head,
But sought in vain; for now, all wild, forlorn,
And vacant, a huge waste around him spread;
The wet cold ground, he feared, must be his only bed.

VI

And be it so—for to the chill night shower
And the sharp wind his head he oft hath bared;
A Sailor he, who many a wretched hour
Hath told; for, landing after labour hard,
Full long endured in hope of just reward,
He to an armèd fleet was forced away
By seamen, who perhaps themselves had shared
Like fate; was hurried off, a helpless prey,
'Gainst all that in *his* heart, or theirs perhaps, said nay.

VII

For years the work of carnage did not cease,
And death's dire aspect daily he surveyed,
Death's minister; then came his glad release,
And hope returned, and pleasure fondly made
Her dwelling in his dreams. By Fancy's aid
The happy husband flies, his arms to throw
Round his wife's neck; the prize of victory laid
In her full lap, he sees such sweet tears flow
As if thenceforth nor pain nor trouble she could know.

VIII

Vain hope! for fraud took all that he had earned.
The lion roars and gluts his tawny brood
Even in the desert's heart; but he, returned,
Bears not to those he loves their needful food.
His home approaching, but in such a mood

That from his sight his children might have run,
He met a traveller, robbed him, shed his blood;
And when the miserable work was done
He fled, a vagrant since, the murderer's fate to shun.

IX

From that day forth no place to him could be
So lonely, but that thence might come a pang
Brought from without to inward misery.
Now, as he plodded on, with sullen clang
A sound of chains along the desert rang;
He looked, and saw upon a gibbet high
A human body that in irons swang,
Uplifted by the tempest whirling by;
And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.

X

It was a spectacle which none might view,
In spot so savage, but with shuddering pain;
Nor only did for him at once renew
All he had feared from man, but roused a train
Of the mind's phantoms, horrible as vain.
The stones, as if to cover him from day,
Rolled at his back along the living plain;
He fell, and without sense or motion lay;
But, when the trance was gone, feebly pursued his way.

XI

As one whose brain habitual frenzy fires
Owes to the fit in which his soul hath tossed
Profounder quiet, when the fit retires,
Even so the dire phantasma which had crossed
His sense, in sudden vacancy quite lost,
Left his mind still as a deep evening stream.
Nor, if accosted now, in thought engrossed,
Moody, or inly troubled, would he seem
To traveller who might talk of any casual theme.

XII

Hurtle the clouds in deeper darkness piled,
Gone is the raven timely rest to seek;
He seemed the only creature in the wild
On whom the elements their rage might wreak;
Save that the bustard, of those regions bleak
Shy tenant, seeing by the uncertain light
A man there wandering, gave a mournful shriek,

And half upon the ground, with strange affright,
Forced hard against the wind a thick unwieldy flight.

XIII

All, all was cheerless to the horizon's bound;
The weary eye—which, wheresoe'er it strays,
Marks nothing but the red sun's setting round,
Or on the earth strange lines, in former days
Left by gigantic arms—at length surveys
What seems an antique castle spreading wide;
Hoary and naked are its walls, and raise
Their brow sublime: in shelter there to bide
He turned, while rain poured down smoking on every side.

XIV

Pile of Stone-henge! so proud to hint yet keep
Thy secrets, thou that lov'st to stand and hear
The Plain resounding to the whirlwind's sweep,
Inmate of lonesome Nature's endless year;
Even if thou saw'st the giant wicker rear
For sacrifice its throngs of living men,
Before thy face did ever wretch appear,
Who in his heart had groaned with deadlier pain
Than he who, tempest-driven, thy shelter now would gain?

XV

Within that fabric of mysterious form
Winds met in conflict, each by turns supreme;
And, from the perilous ground dislodged, through storm
And rain he wildered on, no moon to stream
From gulf of parting clouds one friendly beam,
Nor any friendly sound his footsteps led;
Once did the lightning's faint disastrous gleam
Disclose a naked guide-post's double head,
Sight which, tho' lost at once, a gleam of pleasure shed.

XVI

No swinging sign-board creaked from cottage elm
To stay his steps with faintness overcome;
'Twas dark and void as ocean's watery realm
Roaring with storms beneath night's starless gloom;
No gipsy cowered o'er fire of furze or broom;
No labourer watched his red kiln glaring bright,
Nor taper glimmered dim from sick man's room;
Along the waste no line of mournful light
From lamp of lonely toll-gate streamed athwart the night.

XVII

At length, though hid in clouds, the moon arose;
The downs were visible—and now revealed
A structure stands, which two bare slopes enclose.
It was a spot where, ancient vows fulfilled,
Kind pious hands did to the Virgin build
A lonely Spital, the belated swain
From the night terrors of that waste to shield:
But there no human being could remain,
And now the walls are named the 'Dead House' of the plain.

XVIII

Though he had little cause to love the abode
Of man, or covet sight of mortal face,
Yet when faint beams of light that ruin showed,
How glad he was at length to find some trace
Of human shelter in that dreary place.
Till to his flock the early shepherd goes,
Here shall much-needed sleep his frame embrace.
In a dry nook where fern the floor bestrows
He lays his stiffened limbs,—his eyes begin to close;

XIX

When hearing a deep sigh, that seemed to come
From one who mourned in sleep, he raised his head,
And saw a woman in the naked room
Outstretched, and turning on a restless bed:
The moon a wan dead light around her shed.
He waked her—spake in tone that would not fail,
He hoped, to calm her mind; but ill he sped,
For of that ruin she had heard a tale
Which now with freezing thoughts did all her powers assail;

XX

Had heard of one who, forced from storms to shroud,
Felt the loose walls of this decayed Retreat
Rock to incessant neighings shrill and loud,
While his horse pawed the floor with furious heat;
Till on a stone, that sparkled to his feet,
Struck, and still struck again, the troubled horse:
The man half raised the stone with pain and sweat,
Half raised, for well his arm might lose its force
Disclosing the grim head of a late murdered corse.

XXI

Such tale of this lone mansion she had learned,
And when that shape, with eyes in sleep half drowned,
By the moon's sullen lamp she first discerned,
Cold stony horror all her senses bound.
Her he addressed in words of cheering sound;
Recovering heart, like answer did she make;
And well it was that of the corse there found
In converse that ensued she nothing spake;
She knew not what dire pangs in him such tale could wake.

XXII

But soon his voice and words of kind intent
Banished that dismal thought; and now the wind
In fainter howlings told its *rage* was spent:
Meanwhile discourse ensued of various kind,
Which by degrees a confidence of mind
And mutual interest failed not to create.
And, to a natural sympathy resigned,
In that forsaken building where they sate
The Woman thus retraced her own untoward fate.

XXIII

'By Derwent's side my father dwelt—a man
Of virtuous life, by pious parents bred;
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

XXIV

'A little croft we owned—a plot of corn,
A garden stored with peas, and mint, and thyme,
And flowers for posies, oft on Sunday morn
Plucked while the church bells rang their earliest chime.
Can I forget our freaks at shearing time!
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
The cowslip-gathering in June's dewy prime;
The swans that with white chests upreared in pride
Rushing and racing came to meet me at the water-side!

XXV

'The staff I well remember which upbore
The bending body of my active sire;
His seat beneath the honied sycamore
Where the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
When market-morning came, the neat attire
With which, though bent on haste, myself I decked;
Our watchful house-dog, that would tease and tire
The stranger till its barking-fit I checked;
The red-breast, known for years, which at my casement pecked.

XXVI

'The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
Too little marked how fast they rolled away:
But, through severe mischance and cruel wrong,
My father's substance fell into decay:
We toiled and struggled, hoping for a day
When Fortune might put on a kinder look;
But vain were wishes, efforts vain as they;
He from his old hereditary nook
Must part; the summons came;—our final leave we took.

XXVII

'It was indeed a miserable hour
When, from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage day sweet music made!
Till then he hoped his bones might there be laid
Close by my mother in their native bowers:
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed;—
I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers
Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

XXVIII

'There was a Youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say:
'Mid the green mountains many a thoughtless song
We two had sung, like gladsome birds in May;
When we began to tire of childish play,
We seemed still more and more to prize each other;
We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

XXIX

'Two years were passed since to a distant town
He had repaired to ply a gainful trade:
What tears of bitter grief, till then unknown,
What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
To him we turned:—we had no other aid:
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept;
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said,
He well could love in grief; his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

XXX

'We lived in peace and comfort; and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.
Three lovely babes had lain upon my breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy father died,
When threatened war reduced the children's meal:
Thrice happy! that for him the grave could hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears which flowed for ills which patience might not heal.

XXXI

''Twas a hard change; an evil time was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain:
But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
Beat round to clear the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only serve to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view;
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew,
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

XXXII

'There were we long neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weighed;
Green fields before us, and our native shore,
We breathed a pestilential air, that made
Ravage for which no knell was heard. We prayed
For our departure; wished and wished—nor knew,
'Mid that long sickness and those hopes delayed,
That happier days we never more must view.
The parting signal streamed—at last the land withdrew.

XXXIII

'But the calm summer season now was past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains high before the howling blast,
And many perished in the whirlwind's sweep.
We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue:
We reached the western world, a poor devoted crew.

XXXIV

'The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would unman the firmest heart to hear.
All perished—all in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored.'

XXXV

Here paused she of all present thought forlorn,
Nor voice, nor sound, that moment's pain expressed,
Yet Nature, with excess of grief o'erborne,
From her full eyes their watery load released.
He too was mute: and, ere her weeping ceased,
He rose, and to the ruin's portal went,
And saw the dawn opening the silvery east
With rays of promise north and southward sent;
And soon with crimson fire kindled the firmament.

XXXVI

'O come,' he cried, 'come, after weary night
Of such rough storm, this happy change to view.'
So forth she came, and eastward looked; the sight
Over her brow like dawn of gladness threw;
Upon her cheek, to which its youthful hue
Seemed to return, dried the last lingering tear,
And from her grateful heart a fresh one drew:
The whilst her comrade to her pensive cheer
Tempered fit words of hope; and the lark warbled near.

XXXVII

They looked and saw a lengthening road, and wain
That rang down a bare slope not far remote:
The barrows glistered bright with drops of rain,
Whistled the waggoner with merry note,
The cock far off sounded his clarion throat;
But town, or farm, or hamlet, none they viewed,
Only were told there stood a lonely cot
A long mile thence. While thither they pursued
Their way, the Woman thus her mournful tale renewed.

XXXVIII

'Peaceful as this immeasurable plain
Is now, by beams of dawning light imprest,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main;
The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
I too forgot the heavings of my breast.
How quiet 'round me ship and ocean were!
As quiet all within me. I was blest,
And looked, and fed upon the silent air
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

XXXIX

'Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps,
And groans that rage of racking famine spoke;
The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps,
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke,
The shriek that from the distant battle broke,
The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host
Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish tossed,
Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!

XL

'Some mighty gulf of separation passed,
I seemed transported to another world;
A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurled,
And, whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home
And from all hope I was for ever hurled.
For me—farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might come.

XLI

'And oft I thought (my fancy was so strong)
That I, at last, a resting-place had found;
"Here will I dwell," said I, "my whole life long,
Roaming the illimitable waters round;
Here will I live, of all but heaven disowned,
And end my days upon the peaceful flood."—
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound;
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.

XLII

'No help I sought; in sorrow turned adrift,
Was hopeless, as if cast on some bare rock;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor raised my hand to any door to knock.
I lay where, with his drowsy mates, the cock
From the cross-timber of an outhouse hung:
Dismally tolled, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I fit my tongue.

XLIII

'So passed a second day; and, when the third
Was come, I tried in vain the crowd's resort.
—In deep despair, by frightful wishes stirred,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort;
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
And, after many interruptions short
Of hideous sense, I sank, nor step could crawl:
Unsought for was the help that did my life recall.

XLIV

'Borne to a hospital, I lay with brain
Drowsy and weak, and shattered memory;
I heard my neighbours in their beds complain
Of many things which never troubled me—
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with cold formality,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans which, as they said, might make a dead man start.

XLV

'These things just served to stir the slumbering sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
With strength did memory return; and, thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,
At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
The lanes I sought, and, as the sun retired,
Came where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
The travellers saw me weep, my fate inquired,
And gave me food—and rest, more welcomed, more desired.

XLVI

'Rough potters seemed they, trading soberly
With panniered asses driven from door to door;
But life of happier sort set forth to me,
And other joys my fancy to allure—
The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted; and companions boon,
Well met from far with revelry secure
Among the forest glades, while jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

XLVII

'But ill they suited me—those journeys dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch!
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tip-toe at the lifted latch.
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill:
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

XLVIII

'What could I do, unaided and unblest?
My father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help; and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Nor was I then for toil or service fit;
My deep-drawn sighs no effort could confine;
In open air forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, with idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

XLIX

'The roads I paced, I loitered through the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,
Trusted my life to what chance bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground I for my bed have often used:
But what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth,
Is that I have my inner self abused,
Forgone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

L

'Through tears the rising sun I oft have viewed,
Through tears have seen him towards that world descend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
Three years a wanderer now my course I bend—
Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
Have I.'—She ceased, and weeping turned away;
As if because her tale was at an end,
She wept; because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

LI

True sympathy the Sailor's looks expressed,
His looks—for pondering he was mute the while.
Of social Order's care for wretchedness,
Of Time's sure help to calm and reconcile,
Joy's second spring and Hope's long-treasured smile,
'Twas not for *him* to speak—a man so tried.
Yet, to relieve her heart, in friendly style
Proverbial words of comfort he applied,
And not in vain, while they went pacing side by side.

LII

Ere long, from heaps of turf, before their sight,
Together smoking in the sun's slant beam,
Rise various wreaths that into one unite
Which high and higher mounts with silver gleam:
Fair spectacle,—but instantly a scream
Thence bursting shrill did all remark prevent;
They paused, and heard a hoarser voice blaspheme,
And female cries. Their course they thither bent,
And met a man who foamed with anger vehement.

LIII

A woman stood with quivering lips and pale,
And, pointing to a little child that lay

Stretched on the ground, began a piteous tale;
How in a simple freak of thoughtless play
He had provoked his father, who straightway,
As if each blow were deadlier than the last,
Struck the poor innocent. Pallid with dismay
The Soldier's Widow heard and stood aghast;
And stern looks on the man her grey-haired Comrade cast.

LIV

His voice with indignation rising high
Such further deed in manhood's name forbade;
The peasant, wild in passion, made reply
With bitter insult and revilings sad;
Asked him in scorn what business there he had;
What kind of plunder he was hunting now;
The gallows would one day of him be glad;—
Though inward anguish damped the Sailor's brow,
Yet calm he seemed as thoughts so poignant would allow.

LV

Softly he stroked the child, who lay outstretched
With face to earth; and, as the boy turned round
His battered head, a groan the Sailor fetched
As if he saw—there and upon that ground—
Strange repetition of the deadly wound
He had himself inflicted. Through his brain
At once the griding iron passage found;
Deluge of tender thoughts then rushed amain,
Nor could his sunken eyes the starting tear restrain.

LVI

Within himself he said—What hearts have we!
The blessing this a father gives his child!
Yet happy thou, poor boy! compared with me,
Suffering not doing ill—fate far more mild.
The stranger's looks and tears of wrath beguiled
The father, and relenting thoughts awoke;
He kissed his son—so all was reconciled.
Then, with a voice which inward trouble broke
Ere to his lips it came, the Sailor them bespoke.

LVII

'Bad is the world, and hard is the world's law
Even for the man who wears the warmest fleece;
Much need have ye that time more closely draw
The bond of nature, all unkindness cease,

And that among so few there still be peace:
Else can ye hope but with such numerous foes
Your pains shall ever with your years increase?'—
While from his heart the appropriate lesson flows,
A correspondent calm stole gently o'er his woes.

LVIII

Forthwith the pair passed on; and down they look
Into a narrow valley's pleasant scene
Where wreaths of vapour tracked a winding brook,
That babbled on through groves and meadows green;
A low-roofed house peeped out the trees between;
The dripping groves resound with cheerful lays,
And melancholy lowings intervene
Of scattered herds, that in the meadow graze,
Some amid lingering shade, some touched by the sun's rays.

LIX

They saw and heard, and, winding with the road
Down a thick wood, they dropt into the vale;
Comfort by prouder mansions unbestowed
Their wearied frames, she hoped, would soon regale.
Ere long they reached that cottage in the dale:
It was a rustic inn;—the board was spread,
The milk-maid followed with her brimming pail,
And lustily the master carved the bread,
Kindly the housewife pressed, and they in comfort fed.

LX

Their breakfast done, the pair, though loth, must part;
Wanderers whose course no longer now agrees.
She rose and bade farewell! and, while her heart
Struggled with tears nor could its sorrow ease,
She left him there; for, clustering round his knees,
With his oak-staff the cottage children played;
And soon she reached a spot o'erhung with trees
And banks of ragged earth; beneath the shade
Across the pebbly road a little runnel strayed.

LXI

A cart and horse beside the rivulet stood;
Chequering the canvas roof the sunbeams shone.
She saw the carman bend to scoop the flood
As the wain fronted her,—wherein lay one,
A pale-faced Woman, in disease far gone.

The carman wet her lips as well behoved;
Bed under her lean body there was none,
Though even to die near one she most had loved
She could not of herself those wasted limbs have moved.

LXII

The Soldier's Widow learned with honest pain
And homefelt force of sympathy sincere,
Why thus that worn-out wretch must there sustain
The jolting road and morning air severe.
The wain pursued its way; and following near
In pure compassion she her steps retraced
Far as the cottage. 'A sad sight is here,'
She cried aloud; and forth ran out in haste
The friends whom she had left but a few minutes past.

LXIII

While to the door with eager speed they ran,
From her bare straw the Woman half upraised
Her bony visage—gaunt and deadly wan;
No pity asking, on the group she gazed
With a dim eye, distracted and amazed;
Then sank upon her straw with feeble moan.
Fervently cried the housewife—'God be praised,
I have a house that I can call my own;
Nor shall she perish there, untended and alone!'

LXIV

So in they bear her to the chimney seat,
And busily, though yet with fear, untie
Her garments, and, to warm her icy feet
And chafe her temples, careful hands apply.
Nature reviving, with a deep-drawn sigh
She strove, and not in vain, her head to rear;
Then said—'I thank you all; if I must die,
The God in heaven my prayers for you will hear;
Till now I did not think my end had been so near.

LXV

'Barred every comfort labour could procure,
Suffering what no endurance could assuage,
I was compelled to seek my father's door,
Though loth to be a burthen on his age.
But sickness stopped me in an early stage

Of my sad journey; and within the wain
They placed me—there to end life's pilgrimage,
Unless beneath your roof I may remain:
For I shall never see my father's door again.

LXVI

'My life, Heaven knows, hath long been burthensome;
But, if I have not meekly suffered, meek
May my end be! Soon will this voice be dumb:
Should child of mine e'er wander hither, speak
Of me, say that the worm is on my cheek.—
Torn from our hut, that stood beside the sea
Near Portland lighthouse in a lonesome creek,
My husband served in sad captivity
On shipboard, bound till peace or death should set him free.

LXVII

'A sailor's wife I knew a widow's cares,
Yet two sweet little ones partook my bed;
Hope cheered my dreams, and to my daily prayers
Our heavenly Father granted each day's bread;
Till one was found by stroke of violence dead,
Whose body near our cottage chanced to lie;
A dire suspicion drove us from our shed;
In vain to find a friendly face we try,
Nor could we live together those poor boys and I;

LXVIII

'For evil tongues made oath how on that day
My husband lurked about the neighbourhood;
Now he had fled, and whither none could say,
And *he* had done the deed in the dark wood—
Near his own home!—but he was mild and good;
Never on earth was gentler creature seen;
He'd not have robbed the raven of its food.
My husband's loving kindness stood between
Me and all worldly harms and wrongs however keen.'

LXIX

Alas! the thing she told with labouring breath
The Sailor knew too well. That wickedness
His hand had wrought; and when, in the hour of death,
He saw his Wife's lips move his name to bless
With her last words, unable to suppress

His anguish, with his heart he ceased to strive;
And, weeping loud in this extreme distress,
He cried—'Do pity me! That thou shouldst live
I neither ask nor wish—forgive me, but forgive!'

LXX

To tell the change that Voice within her wrought
Nature by sign or sound made no essay;
A sudden joy surprised expiring thought,
And every mortal pang dissolved away.
Borne gently to a bed, in death she lay;
Yet still, while over her the husband bent,
A look was in her face which seemed to say,
'Be blest: by sight of thee from heaven was sent
Peace to my parting soul, the fulness of content.'

LXXI

She slept in peace,—his pulses throbbed and stopped,
Breathless he gazed upon her face,—then took
Her hand in his, and raised it, but both dropped,
When on his own he cast a rueful look.
His ears were never silent; sleep forsook
His burning eyelids stretched and stiff as lead;
All night from time to time under him shook
The floor as he lay shuddering on his bed;
And oft he groaned aloud, 'O God, that I were dead!'

LXXII

The Soldier's Widow lingered in the cot;
And, when he rose, he thanked her pious care
Through which his Wife, to that kind shelter brought,
Died in his arms; and with those thanks a prayer
He breathed for her, and for that merciful pair.
The corse interred, not one hour he remained
Beneath their roof, but to the open air
A burthen, now with fortitude sustained,
He bore within a breast where dreadful quiet reigned.

LXXIII

Confirmed of purpose, fearlessly prepared
For act and suffering, to the city straight
He journeyed, and forthwith his crime declared:
'And from your doom,' he added, 'now I wait,
Nor let it linger long, the murderer's fate.'

Not ineffectual was that piteous claim:
'O welcome sentence which will end though late,'
He said, 'the pangs that to my conscience came
Out of that deed. My trust, Saviour! is in thy name!'

LXXIV

His fate was pitied. Him in iron case
(Reader, forgive the intolerable thought)
They hung not:—no one on *his* form or face
Could gaze, as on a show by idlers sought;
No kindred sufferer, to his death-place brought
By lawless curiosity or chance,
When into storm the evening sky is wrought,
Upon his swinging corse an eye can glance,
And drop, as he once dropped, in miserable trance.

1791-1794

THE BORDERERS

A TRAGEDY

(Composed 1795-1796)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARMADUKE, OSWALD, WALLACE, LACY, LENNOX — Of the Band of Borderers	Host
	Forester
	ELDRED, a Peasant
	Peasant, Pilgrims, etc.
HERBERT	IDONEA
WILFRED, Servant to MARMADUKE	Female Beggar
	ELEANOR, Wife to ELDRED

SCENE—*Borders of England and Scotland*

TIME—*The Reign of Henry III*

READERS already acquainted with my Poems will recognise, in the following composition, some eight or ten lines, which I have not scrupled to retain in the places where they originally stood. It is proper however to add that they would not have been used elsewhere, if I had foreseen the time when I might be induced to publish this Tragedy.

February 28, 1842

ACT I

SCENE—*Road in a Wood*

WALLACE *and* LACY

LACY. The Troop will be impatient; let us hie
Back to our post, and strip the Scottish Foray
Of their rich Spoil, ere they recross the Border
—Pity that our young Chief will have no part
In this good service.

WAL. Rather let us grieve
That, in the undertaking which has caused
His absence, he hath sought, whate'er his aim,
Companionship with One of crooked ways,

From whose perverted soul can come no good
To our confiding, open-hearted, Leader.
LACY. True; and, remembering how the Band have proved
That Oswald finds small favour in our sight,
Well may we wonder he has gained such power
Over our much-loved Captain.
WAL. I have heard
Of some dark deed to which in early life
His passion drove him—then a Voyager
Upon the midland Sea. You knew his bearing
In Palestine?
LACY. Where he despised alike
Mohammedan and Christian. But enough;
Let us begone—the Band may else be foiled. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MARMADUKE *and* WILFRED

WIL. Be cautious, my dear Master!
MAR. I perceive
That fear is like a cloak which old men huddle
About their love, as if to keep it warm.
WIL. Nay, but I grieve that we should part. This Stranger,
For such he is——
MAR. Your busy fancies, Wilfred,
Might tempt me to a smile; but what of him?
WIL. You know that you have saved his life.
MAR. I know it.
WIL. And that he hates you!—Pardon me, perhaps
That word was hasty.
MAR. Fy! no more of it.
WIL. Dear Master! gratitude 's a heavy burden
To a proud Soul.—Nobody loves this Oswald—
Yourself, you do not love him.
MAR. I do more,
I honour him. Strong feelings to his heart
Are natural; and from no one can be learnt
More of man's thoughts and ways than his experience
Has given him power to teach: and then for courage
And enterprise—what perils hath he shunned?
What obstacles hath he failed to overcome?
Answer these questions, from our common knowledge,
And be at rest.
WIL. Oh, Sir!
MAR. Peace, my good Wilfred;
Repair to Liddesdale, and tell the Band
I shall be with them in two days, at farthest.
WIL. May He whose eye is over all protect you! [*Exit.*

Enter OSWALD (*a bunch of plants in his hand*)

Osw. This wood is rich in plants and curious simples.
MAR. (*looking at them*). The wild rose, and the poppy, and
the nightshade:
Which is your favorite, Oswald?
Osw. That which, while it is
Strong to destroy, is also strong to heal—[*Looking forward.*
Not yet in sight!—We 'll saunter here awhile;
They cannot mount the hill, by us unseen.
MAR. (*a letter in his hand*). It is no common thing when one
like you
Performs these delicate services, and therefore
I feel myself much bounden to you, Oswald;
'Tis a strange letter this!—You saw her write it?
Osw. And saw the tears with which she blotted it.
MAR. And nothing less would satisfy him?
Osw. No less;
For that another in his Child's affection
Should hold a place, as if 'twere robbery,
He seemed to quarrel with the very thought.
Besides, I know not what strange prejudice
Is rooted in his mind; this Band of ours,
Which you 've collected for the noblest ends,
Along the confines of the Esk and Tweed
To guard the Innocent—he calls us 'Outlaws';
And, for yourself, in plain terms he asserts
This garb was taken up that indolence
Might want no cover, and rapacity
Be better fed.
MAR. Ne'er may I own the heart
That cannot feel for one, helpless as he is.
Osw. Thou know'st me for a Man not easily moved,
Yet was I grievously provoked to think
Of what I witnessed.
MAR. This day will suffice
To end her wrongs.
Osw. But if the blind Man's tale
Should *yet* be true?
MAR. Would it were possible!
Did not the Soldier tell thee that himself,
And others who survived the wreck, beheld
The Baron Herbert perish in the waves
Upon the coast of Cyprus?
Osw. Yes, even so,
And I had heard the like before: in sooth
The tale of this his quondam Barony

Is cunningly devised; and, on the back
Of his forlorn appearance, could not fail
To make the proud and vain his tributaries,
And stir the pulse of lazy charity.
The seignories of Herbert are in Devon;
We, neighbours of the Esk and Tweed: 'tis much
The Arch-impostor——

MAR. Treat him gently, Oswald;
Though I have never seen his face, methinks,
There cannot come a day when I shall cease
To love him. I remember, when a Boy
Of scarcely seven years' growth, beneath the Elm
That casts its shade over our village school,
'Twas my delight to sit and hear Idonea
Repeat her Father's terrible adventures,
Till all the band of playmates wept together;
And that was the beginning of my love.
And, through all converse of our later years,
An image of this old Man still was present,
When I had been most happy. Pardon me
If this be idly spoken.

OSW. See, they come,
Two Travellers!

MAR. (*points*). The woman is Idonea.

OSW. And leading Herbert.

MAR. We must let them pass—
This thicket will conceal us. [*They step aside.*

Enter IDONEA, *leading* HERBERT *blind*

IDON. Dear Father, you sigh deeply; ever since
We left the willow shade by the brook-side,
Your natural breathing has been troubled.

HER. Nay,
You are too fearful; yet must I confess,
Our march of yesterday had better suited
A firmer step than mine.

IDON. That dismal Moor—
In spite of all the larks that cheered our path,
I never can forgive it: but how steadily
You paced along, when the bewildering moonlight
Mocked me with many a strange fantastic shape!—
I thought the Convent never would appear;
It seemed to move away from us: and yet,
That you are thus the fault is mine; for the air
Was soft and warm, no dew lay on the grass,
And midway on the waste ere night had fallen

I spied a Covert walled and roofed with sods—
A miniature; belike some Shepherd-boy,
Who might have found a nothing-doing hour
Heavier than work, raised it: within that hut
We might have made a kindly bed of heath,
And thankfully there rested side by side
Wrapped in our cloaks, and, with recruited strength,
Have hailed the morning sun. But cheerily, Father,—
That staff of yours, I could almost have heart
To fling 't away from you: you make no use
Of me, or of my strength;—come, let me feel
That you do press upon me. There—indeed
You are quite exhausted. Let us rest awhile
On this green bank. [*He sits down.*

HER. (*after some time*). Idonea, you are silent,
And I divine the cause.

IDON. Do not reproach me:
I pondered patiently your wish and will
When I gave way to your request; and now,
When I behold the ruins of that face,
Those eyeballs dark—dark beyond hope of light,
And think that they were blasted for my sake,
The name of Marmaduke is blown away:
Father, I would not change that sacred feeling
For all this world can give.

HER. Nay, be composed:
Few minutes gone a faintness overspread
My frame, and I bethought me of two things
I ne'er had heart to separate—my grave,
And thee, my child!

IDON. Believe me, honoured Sire!
'Tis weariness that breeds these gloomy fancies,
And you mistake the cause: you hear the woods
Resound with music, could you see the sun,
And look upon the pleasant face of Nature——

HER. I comprehend thee—I should be as cheerful
As if we two were twins; two songsters bred
In the same nest, my spring-time one with thine.
My fancies, fancies if they be, are such
As come, dear Child! from a far deeper source
Than bodily weariness. While here we sit
I feel my strength returning.—The bequest
Of thy kind Patroness, which to receive
We have thus far adventured, will suffice
To save thee from the extreme of penury;
But when thy Father must lie down and die,
How wilt thou stand alone?

IDON. Is he not strong?
Is he not valiant?
HER. Am I then so soon
Forgotten? have my warnings passed so quickly
Out of thy mind? My dear, my only, Child;
Thou wouldst be leaning on a broken reed—
This Marmaduke ——
IDON. O could you hear his voice:
Alas! you do not know him. He is one
(I wot not what ill tongue has wronged him with you)
All gentleness and love. His face bespeaks
A deep and simple meekness: and that Soul,
Which with the motion of a virtuous act
Flashes a look of terror upon guilt,
Is, after conflict, quiet as the ocean,
By a miraculous finger stilled at once.
HER. Unhappy Woman!
IDON. Nay, it was my duty
Thus much to speak; but think not I forget—
Dear Father! how *could* I forget and live?—
You and the story of that doleful night
When, Antioch blazing to her topmost towers,
You rushed into the murderous flames, returned
Blind as the grave, but, as you oft have told me,
Clasping your infant Daughter to your heart.
HER. Thy Mother too!—scarce had I gained the door,
I caught her voice; she threw herself upon me,
I felt thy infant brother in her arms;
She saw my blasted face—a tide of soldiers
That instant rushed between us, and I heard
Her last death-shriek, distinct among a thousand.
IDON. Nay, Father, stop not; let me hear it all.
HER. Dear Daughter! precious relic of that time—
For my old age, it doth remain with thee
To make it what thou wilt. Thou hast been told,
That when, on our return from Palestine,
I found how my domains had been usurped,
I took thee in my arms, and we began
Our wanderings together. Providence
At length conducted us to Rossland,—there,
Our melancholy story moved a Stranger
To take thee to her home—and for myself,
Soon after, the good Abbot of St. Cuthbert's
Supplied my helplessness with food and raiment,
And, as thou know'st, gave me that humble Cot
Where now we dwell.—For many years I bore
Thy absence, till old age and fresh infirmities

Exacted thy return, and our reunion.
I did not think that, during that long absence,
My Child, forgetful of the name of Herbert,
Had given her love to a wild Freebooter,
Who here, upon the borders of the Tweed,
Doth prey alike on two distracted Countries,
Traitor to both.

IDON. Oh, could you hear his voice!
I will not call on Heaven to vouch for me,
But let this kiss speak what is in my heart.

Enter a Peasant

PEA. Good morrow, Strangers! If you want a Guide,
Let me have leave to serve you!

IDON. My Companion
Hath need of rest; the sight of Hut or Hostel
Would be most welcome.

PEA. Yon white hawthorn gained,
You will look down into a dell, and there
Will see an ash from which a sign-board hangs;
The house is hidden by the shade. Old Man,
You seem worn out with travel—shall I support you?

HER. I thank you; but, a resting-place so near,
'Twere wrong to trouble you.

PEA. God speed you both.
[*Exit* Peasant.

HER. Idonea, we must part. Be not alarmed—
'Tis but for a few days—a thought has struck me.

IDON. That I should leave you at this house, and thence
Proceed alone. It shall be so; for strength
Would fail you ere our journey's end be reached.
[*Exit* HERBERT *supported by* IDONEA.

Re-enter MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD

MAR. This instant will we stop him——

OSW. Be not hasty,
For sometimes, in despite of my conviction,
He tempted me to think the Story true;
'Tis plain he loves the Maid, and what he said
That savoured of aversion to thy name
Appeared the genuine colour of his soul—
Anxiety lest mischief should befall her
After his death.

MAR. I have been much deceived.

OSW. But sure he loves the Maiden, and never love
Could find delight to nurse itself so strangely,

Thus to torment her with *inventions*!—death—
There must be truth in this.
MAR. Truth in his story!
He must have felt it then, known what it was,
And in such wise to rack her gentle heart
Had been a tenfold cruelty.
OSW. Strange pleasures
Do we poor mortals cater for ourselves!
To see him thus provoke her tenderness
With tales of weakness and infirmity!
I 'd wager on his life for twenty years.
MAR. We will not waste an hour in such a cause.
OSW. Why, this is noble! shake her off at once.
MAR. Her virtues are his instruments.—A Man
Who has so practised on the world's cold sense,
May well deceive his Child—What! leave her thus,
A prey to a deceiver?—no—no—no—
'Tis but a word and then——
OSW. Something is here
More than we see, or whence this strong aversion?
Marmaduke! I suspect unworthy tales
Have reached his ear—you have had enemies.
MAR. Enemies!—of his own coinage.
OSW. That may be,
But wherefore slight protection such as you
Have power to yield? perhaps he looks elsewhere.—
I am perplexed.
MAR. What hast thou heard or seen?
OSW. No—no—the thing stands clear of mystery;
(As you have said) he coins himself the slander
With which he taints her ear;—for a plain reason;
He dreads the presence of a virtuous man
Like you; he knows your eye would search his heart,
Your justice stamp upon his evil deeds
The punishment they merit. All is plain:
It cannot be——
MAR. What cannot be?
OSW. Yet that a Father
Should in his love admit no rivalship,
And torture thus the heart of his own Child——
MAR. Nay, you abuse my friendship!
OSW. Heaven forbid!—
There was a circumstance, trifling indeed—
It struck me at the time—yet I believe
I never should have thought of it again
But for the scene which we by chance have witnessed.
MAR. What is your meaning?

OSW. Two days gone I saw,
Though at a distance and he was disguised,
Hovering round Herbert's door, a man whose figure
Resembled much that cold voluptuary,
The villain, Clifford. He hates you, and he knows
Where he can stab you deepest.
MAR. Clifford never
Would stoop to skulk about a Cottage door—
It could not be.
OSW. And yet I now remember
That, when your praise was warm upon my tongue,
And the blind Man was told how you had rescued
A maiden from the ruffian violence
Of this same Clifford, he became impatient
And would not hear me.
MAR. No—it cannot be—
I dare not trust myself with such a thought—
Yet whence this strange aversion? You are a man
Not used to rash conjectures——
OSW. If you deem it
A thing worth further notice, we must act
With caution, sift the matter artfully.
[*Exeunt* MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD.

SCENE—*The door of the Hostel*

HERBERT, IDONEA, *and* Host

HER. (*seated*). As I am dear to you, remember, Child!
This last request.
IDON. You know me, Sire; farewell!
HER. And are you going then? Come, come, Idonea,
We must not part,—I have measured many a league
When these old limbs had need of rest,—and now
I will not play the sluggard.
IDON. Nay, sit down.
[*Turning to* Host.
Good Host, such tendance as you would expect
From your own Children, if yourself were sick,
Let this old Man find at your hands; poor Leader,
[*Looking at the dog.*
We soon shall meet again. If thou neglect
This charge of thine, then ill befall thee!—Look,
The little fool is loth to stay behind.
Sir Host! by all the love you bear to courtesy,
Take care of him, and feed the truant well.
HOST. Fear not, I will obey you;—but One so young,

And One so fair, it goes against my heart
That you should travel unattended, Lady!—
I have a palfrey and a groom: the lad
Shall squire you, (would it not be better, Sir?)
And for less fee than I would let him run
For any lady I have seen this twelvemonth.

IDON. You know, Sir, I have been too long your guard
Not to have learnt to laugh at little fears.
Why, if a wolf should leap from out a thicket,
A look of mine would send him scouring back,
Unless I differ from the thing I am
When you are by my side.

HER. Idonea, wolves
Are not the enemies that move my fears.

IDON. No more, I pray, of this. Three days at farthest
Will bring me back—protect him, Saints—farewell!
[*Exit* IDONEA.

HOST. 'Tis never drought with us—St. Cuthbert and his Pilgrims,
Thanks to them, are to us a stream of comfort:
Pity the Maiden did not wait a while;
She could not, Sir, have failed of company.

HER. Now she is gone, I fain would call her back.

HOST. (*calling*). Holla!

HER. No, no, the business must be done.—
What means this riotous noise?

HOST. The villagers
Are flocking in—a wedding festival—
That's all—God save you, Sir.

Enter OSWALD

OSW. Ha! as I live,
The Baron Herbert.

HOST. Mercy, the Baron Herbert!

OSW. So far into your journey! on my life,
You are a lusty Traveller. But how fare you?

HER. Well as the wreck I am permits. And you, Sir?

OSW. I do not see Idonea.

HER. Dutiful Girl,
She is gone before, to spare my weariness.
But what has brought you hither?

OSW. A slight affair,
That will be soon despatched.

HER. Did Marmaduke
Receive that letter?

OSW. Be at peace.—The tie
Is broken, you will hear no more of *him*.

HER. This is true comfort, thanks a thousand times!—
That noise!—would I had gone with her as far
As the Lord Clifford's Castle: I have heard
That, in his milder moods, he has expressed
Compassion for me. His influence is great
With Henry, our good King;—the Baron might
Have heard my suit, and urged my plea at Court.
No matter—he's a dangerous Man.—That noise!—
'Tis too disorderly for sleep or rest.
Idonea would have fears for me,—the Convent
Will give me quiet lodging. You have a boy, good Host,
And he must lead me back.
OSW. You are most lucky;
I have been waiting in the wood hard by
For a companion—here he comes; our journey

Enter MARMADUKE

Lies on your way; accept us as your Guides.
HER. Alas! I creep so slowly.
OSW. Never fear;
We'll not complain of that.
HER. My limbs are stiff
And need repose. Could you but wait an hour?
OSW. Most willingly!—Come, let me lead you in,
And, while you take your rest, think not of us;
We'll stroll into the wood; lean on my arm.
[*Conducts* HERBERT *into the house. Exit* MARMADUKE.

Enter Villagers

OSW. (*to himself coming out of the hostel*). I have prepared a most apt Instrument—
The Vagrant must, no doubt, be loitering somewhere
About this ground; she hath a tongue well skilled,
By mingling natural matter of her own
With all the daring fictions I have taught her,
To win belief, such as my plot requires. [*Exit* OSWALD.

Enter more Villagers, *a* Musician *among them*

HOST (*to them*). Into the court, my Friend, and perch yourself
Aloft upon the elm tree. Pretty Maids,
Garlands and flowers, and cakes and merry thoughts,
Are here, to send the sun into the west
More speedily than you belike would wish.

SCENE *changes to the Wood adjoining the Hostel*—MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD *entering*

MAR. I would fain hope that we deceive ourselves:
When first I saw him sitting there, alone,
It struck upon my heart I know not how.
OSW. To-day will clear up all.—You marked a Cottage,
That ragged Dwelling, close beneath a rock
By the brook-side: it is the abode of One,
A Maiden innocent till ensnared by Clifford,
Who soon grew weary of her; but, alas!
What she had seen and suffered turned her brain.
Cast off by her Betrayer, she dwells alone,
Nor moves her hands to any needful work:
She eats her food which every day the peasants
Bring to her hut; and so the Wretch has lived
Ten years; and no one ever heard her voice;
But every night at the first stroke of twelve
She quits her house, and, in the neighbouring Churchyard
Upon the self-same spot, in rain or storm,
She paces out the hour 'twixt twelve and one—
She paces round and round an Infant's grave,
And in the Churchyard sod her feet have worn
A hollow ring; they say it is knee-deep——
Ah! what is here?

[*A female* Beggar *rises up, rubbing her eyes as if in sleep—a Child in her arms.*

BEG. Oh! Gentlemen, I thank you;
I 've had the saddest dream that ever troubled
The heart of living creature.—My poor Babe
Was crying, as I thought, crying for bread
When I had none to give him; whereupon
I put a slip of foxglove in his hand,
Which pleased him so, that he was hushed at once:
When into one of those same spotted bells
A bee came darting, which the Child with joy
Imprisoned there, and held it to his ear,
And suddenly grew black, as he would die.
MAR. We have no time for this, my babbling Gossip;
Here 's what will comfort you. [*Gives her money.*
BEG. The saints reward you
For this good deed!—Well, Sirs, this passed away;
And afterwards I fancied, a strange dog,
Trotting alone along the beaten road,
Came to my child as by my side he slept,
And, fondling, licked his face, then on a sudden

Snapped fierce to make a morsel of his head:
But here he is [*kissing the Child*], it must have been a dream.
Osw. When next inclined to sleep, take my advice
And put your head, good Woman, under cover.
Beg. Oh, Sir, you would not talk thus, if you knew
What life is this of ours, how sleep will master
The weary-worn.—You gentlefolk have got
Warm chambers to your wish. I 'd rather be
A stone than what I am.—But two nights gone,
The darkness overtook me—wind and rain
Beat hard upon my head—and yet I saw
A glow-worm, through the covert of the furze,
Shine calmly as if nothing ailed the sky:
At which I half accused the God in Heaven.—
You must forgive me.
Osw. Ay, and if you think
The Fairies are to blame, and you should chide
Your favourite saint—no matter—this good day
Has made amends.
Beg. Thanks to you both; but, Oh Sir!
How would you like to travel on whole hours
As I have done, my eyes upon the ground,
Expecting still, I know not how, to find
A piece of money glittering through the dust?
Mar. This woman is a prater. Pray, good Lady!
Do you tell fortunes?
Beg. Oh Sir, you are like the rest.
This Little-one—it cuts me to the heart—
Well! they might turn a beggar from their doors,
But there are Mothers who can see the Babe
Here at my breast, and ask me where I bought it:
This they can do, and look upon my face—
But you, Sir, should be kinder.
Mar. Come hither, Fathers,
And learn what nature is from this poor Wretch!
Beg. Ay, Sir, there 's nobody that feels for us.
Why now—but yesterday I overtook
A blind old Greybeard and accosted him,
I' th' name of all the Saints, and by the Mass
He should have used me better!—Charity!
If you can melt a rock, he is your man;
But I 'll be even with him—here again
Have I been waiting for him.
Osw. Well, but softly,
Who is it that hath wronged you?
Beg. Mark you me;
I 'll point him out;—a Maiden is his guide,

Lovely as Spring's first rose; a little dog,
Tied by a woollen cord, moves on before
With look as sad as he were dumb; the cur,
I owe him no ill will, but in good sooth
He does his Master credit.
MAR. As I live,
'Tis Herbert and no other!
BEG. 'Tis a feast to see him,
Lank as a ghost and tall, his shoulders bent,
And long beard white with age—yet evermore,
As if he were the only Saint on earth,
He turns his face to heaven.
OSW. But why so violent
Against this venerable Man?
BEG. I'll tell you:
He has the very hardest heart on earth;
I had as lief turn to the Friar's school
And knock for entrance, in mid holiday.
MAR. But to your story.
BEG. I was saying, Sir—
Well!—he has often spurned me like a toad,
But yesterday was worse than all; at last
I overtook him, Sirs, my Babe and I,
And begged a little aid for charity:
But he was snappish as a cottage cur.
Well then, says I—I'll out with it; at which
I cast a look upon the Girl, and felt
As if my heart would burst; and so I left him.
OSW. I think, good Woman, you are the very person
Whom, but some few days past, I saw in Eskdale,
At Herbert's door.
BEG. Ay; and if truth were known
I have good business there.
OSW. I met you at the threshold,
And he seemed angry.
BEG. Angry! well he might;
And long as I can stir I'll dog him.—Yesterday,
To serve me so, and knowing that he owes
The best of all he has to me and mine.
But 'tis all over now. That good old Lady
Has left a power of riches; and I say it,
If there 's a lawyer in the land, the knave
Shall give me half.
OSW. What 's this?—I fear, good Woman,
You have been insolent.
BEG. And there 's the Baron,
I spied him skulking in his peasant's dress.

Osw. How say you? in disguise?—
MAR. But what's your business
With Herbert or his Daughter?
BEG. Daughter! truly—
But how's the day?—I fear, my little Boy,
We've overslept ourselves.—Sirs, have you seen him?
[*Offers to go.*
MAR. I must have more of this;—you shall not stir
An inch, till I am answered. Know you aught
That doth concern this Herbert?
BEG. You are provoked,
And will misuse me, Sir!
MAR. No trifling, Woman!—
Osw. You are as safe as in a sanctuary; 500
Speak.
MAR. Speak!
BEG. He is a most hard-hearted Man.
MAR. Your life is at my mercy.
BEG. Do not harm me,
And I will tell you all!—You know not, Sir,
What strong temptations press upon the Poor.
Osw. Speak out.
BEG. Oh, Sir, I've been a wicked Woman.
Osw. Nay, but speak out!
BEG. He flattered me, and said
What harvest it would bring us both; and so,
I parted with the Child.
MAR. Parted with whom?
BEG. Idonea, as he calls her; but the Girl
Is mine.
MAR. Yours, Woman! are you Herbert's wife? 510
BEG. Wife, Sir! his wife—not I; my husband, Sir,
Was of Kirkoswald—many a snowy winter
We've weathered out together. My poor Gilfred!
He has been two years in his grave.
MAR. Enough.
Osw. We've solved the riddle—Miscreant!
MAR. Do you,
Good Dame, repair to Liddesdale and wait
For my return; be sure you shall have justice.
Osw. A lucky woman!—go, you have done good service.
[*Aside.*
MAR. (*to himself*). Eternal praises on the power that saved her!—
Osw. (*gives her money*). Here's for your little boy—and when you christen him 520
I'll be his Godfather.

BEG. Oh, Sir, you are merry with me.
In grange or farm this Hundred scarcely owns
A dog that does not know me.—These good Folks,
For love of God, I must not pass their doors;
But I 'll be back with my best speed: for you—
God bless and thank you both, my gentle Masters.
[*Exit* Beggar.

MAR. (*to himself*). The cruel Viper!—Poor devoted Maid,
Now I *do* love thee.

OSW. I am thunderstruck.

MAR. Where is she—holla!
[*Calling to the* Beggar, *who returns; he looks at her stedfastly.*
You are Idonea's Mother?—
Nay, be not terrified—it does me good
To look upon you.

OSW. (*interrupting*). In a peasant's dress
You saw, who was it?

BEG. Nay, I dare not speak;
He is a man, if it should come to his ears
I never shall be heard of more.

OSW. Lord Clifford?

BEG. What can I do? believe me, gentle Sirs,
I love her, though I dare not call her daughter.

OSW. Lord Clifford—did you see him talk with Herbert?

BEG. Yes, to my sorrow—under the great oak
At Herbert's door—and when he stood beside
The blind Man—at the silent Girl he looked
With such a look—it makes me tremble, Sir,
To think of it.

OSW. Enough! you may depart.

MAR. (*to himself*). Father!—to God himself we cannot give
A holier name; and, under such a mask,
To lead a Spirit, spotless as the blessed,
To that abhorrèd den of brutish vice!—
Oswald, the firm foundation of my life
Is going from under me; these strange discoveries—
Looked at from every point of fear or hope,
Duty, or love—involve, I feel, my ruin.

ACT II

SCENE—*A Chamber in the Hostel*—OSWALD *alone, rising from a Table on which he had been writing*

OSW. They chose *him* for their Chief!—what covert part
He, in the preference, modest Youth, might take,

I neither know nor care. The insult bred
More of contempt than hatred; both are flown;
That either e'er existed is my shame:
'Twas a dull spark—a most unnatural fire
That died the moment the air breathed upon it.
—These fools of feeling are mere birds of winter
That haunt some barren island of the north,
Where, if a famishing man stretch forth his hand,
They think it is to feed them. I have left him
To solitary meditation;—now
For a few swelling phrases, and a flash
Of truth, enough to dazzle and to blind,
And he is mine for ever—here he comes.

Enter MARMADUKE

MAR. These ten years she has moved her lips all day
And never speaks!
OSW. Who is it?
MAR. I have seen her.
OSW. Oh! the poor tenant of that ragged homestead,
Her whom the Monster, Clifford, drove to madness.
MAR. I met a peasant near the spot; he told me,
These ten years she had sate all day alone
Within those empty walls.
OSW. I too have seen her;
Chancing to pass this way some six months gone,
At midnight, I betook me to the Churchyard:
The moon shone clear, the air was still, so still
The trees were silent as the graves beneath them.
Long did I watch, and saw her pacing round
Upon the self-same spot, still round and round,
Her lips for ever moving.
MAR. At her door
Rooted I stood; for, looking at the woman,
I thought I saw the skeleton of Idonea.
OSW. But the pretended Father——
MAR. Earthly law
Measures not crimes like his.
OSW. *We* rank not, happily,
With those who take the spirit of their rule
From that soft class of devotees who feel
Reverence for life so deeply, that they spare
The verminous brood, and cherish what they spare
While feeding on their bodies. Would that Idonea
Were present, to the end that we might hear
What she can urge in his defence; she loves him.

MAR. Yes, loves him; 'tis a truth that multiplies
His guilt a thousand-fold.
OSW. 'Tis most perplexing:
What must be done?
MAR. We will conduct her hither;
These walls shall witness it—from first to last
He shall reveal himself.
OSW. Happy are we,
Who live in these disputed tracts, that own
No law but what each man makes for himself;
Here justice has indeed a field of triumph.
MAR. Let us begone and bring her hither;—here
The truth shall be laid open, his guilt proved
Before her face. The rest be left to me.
OSW. You will be firm: but though we well may trust
The issue to the justice of the cause,
Caution must not be flung aside; remember,
Yours is no common life. Self-stationed here,
Upon these savage confines, we have seen you
Stand like an isthmus 'twixt two stormy seas
That oft have checked their fury at your biddin
'Mid the deep holds of Solway's mossy waste,
Your single virtue has transformed a Band
Of fierce barbarians into Ministers
Of peace and order. Aged men with tears
Have blessed their steps, the fatherless retire
For shelter to their banners. But it is,
As you must needs have deeply felt, it is
In darkness and in tempest that we seek
The majesty of Him who rules the world.
Benevolence, that has not heart to use
The wholesome ministry of pain and evil,
Becomes at last weak and contemptible.
Your generous qualities have won due praise,
But vigorous Spirits look for something more
Than Youth's spontaneous products; and to-day
You will not disappoint them; and hereafter——
MAR. You are wasting words; hear me then, once for all:
You are a Man—and therefore, if compassion,
Which to our kind is natural as life,
Be known unto you, you will love this Woman,
Even as I do; but I should loathe the light,
If I could think one weak or partial feeling——
OSW. You will forgive me——
MAR. If I ever knew
My heart, could penetrate its inmost core,
'Tis at this moment.—Oswald, I have loved

To be the friend and father of the oppressed,
A comforter of sorrow;—there is something
Which looks like a transition in my soul,
And yet it is not.—Let us lead him hither.
Osw. Stoop for a moment; 'tis an act of justice;
And where 's the triumph if the delegate
Must fall in the execution of his office?
The deed is done—if you will have it so—
Here where we stand—that tribe of vulgar wretches
(You saw them gathering for the festival)
Rush in—the villains seize us——
Mar. Seize!
Osw. Yes, they—
Men who are little given to sift and weigh—
Would wreak on us the passion of the moment.
Mar. The cloud will soon disperse—farewell—but stay,
Thou wilt relate the story.
Osw. Am I neither
To bear a part in this Man's punishment,
Nor be its witness?
Mar. I had many hopes
That were most dear to me, and some will bear
To be transferred to thee.
Osw. When I 'm dishonoured!
Mar. I would preserve thee. How may this be done?
Osw. By showing that you look beyond the instant.
A few leagues hence we shall have open ground,
And nowhere upon earth is place so fit
To look upon the deed. Before we enter
The barren Moor, hangs from a beetling rock
The shattered Castle in which Clifford oft
Has held infernal orgies—with the gloom,
The very superstition of the place,
Seasoning his wickedness. The Debauchee
Would there perhaps have gathered the first fruits
Of this mock Father's guilt.

Enter Host *conducting* Herbert

Host. The Baron Herbert
Attends your pleasure.
Osw. (*to* Host). We are ready—
(*to* Herbert) Sir!
I hope you are refreshed.—I have just written
A notice for your Daughter, that she may know
What is become of you.—You 'll sit down and sign it;
'Twill glad her heart to see her father's signature.
[*Gives the letter he had written.*

HER. Thanks for your care. [*Sits down and writes. Exit* Host.
OSW. (*aside to* MARMADUKE). Perhaps it would be useful
That you too should subscribe your name.
[MARMADUKE *overlooks* HERBERT—*then writes—examines the letter eagerly.*
MAR. I cannot leave this paper. [*He puts it up, agitated.*
OSW. (*aside*). Dastard! Come.
[MARMADUKE *goes towards* HERBERT *and supports him*—MARMADUKE *tremblingly beckons* OSWALD *to take his place.*
MAR. (*as he quits* HERBERT). There is a palsy in his limbs—he shakes.
[*Exeunt* OSWALD *and* HERBERT—MARMADUKE *following.*

SCENE *changes to a Wood—a Group of* Pilgrims *and* IDONEA *with them*

FIRST PIL. A grove of darker and more lofty shade
I never saw.
SEC. PIL. The music of the birds
Drops deadened from a roof so thick with leaves.
OLD PIL. This news! it made my heart leap up with joy.
IDON. I scarcely can believe it.
OLD PIL. Myself, I heard
The Sheriff read, in open Court, a letter
Which purported it was the royal pleasure
The Baron Herbert, who, as was supposed,
Had taken refuge in this neighbourhood,
Should be forthwith restored. The hearing, Lady,
Filled my dim eyes with tears.—When I returned
From Palestine, and brought with me a heart,
Though rich in heavenly, poor in earthly, comfort,
I met your Father, then a wandering Outcast:
He had a Guide, a Shepherd's boy; but grieved
He was that One so young should pass his youth
In such sad service; and he parted with him.
We joined our tales of wretchedness together,
And begged our daily bread from door to door.
I talk familiarly to you, sweet Lady!
For once you loved me.
IDON. You shall back with me
And see your Friend again. The good old Man
Will be rejoiced to greet you.
OLD PIL. It seems but yesterday
That a fierce storm o'ertook us, worn with travel,
In a deep wood remote from any town.

A cave that opened to the road presented
A friendly shelter, and we entered in.
IDON. And I was with you?
OLD PIL. If indeed 'twas you—
But you were then a tottering Little-one—
We sate us down. The sky grew dark and darker:
I struck my flint, and built up a small fire
With rotten boughs and leaves, such as the winds
Of many autumns in the cave had piled.
Meanwhile the storm fell heavy on the woods;
Our little fire sent forth a cheering warmth
And we were comforted, and talked of comfort;
But 'twas an angry night, and o'er our heads
The thunder rolled in peals that would have made
A sleeping man uneasy in his bed.
O Lady, you have need to love your Father.
His voice—methinks I hear it now, his voice
When, after a broad flash that filled the cave,
He said to me, that he had seen his Child,
A face (no cherub's face more beautiful)
Revealed by lustre brought with it from Heaven;
And it was you, dear Lady!
IDON. God be praised,
That I have been his comforter till now!
And will be so through every change of fortune
And every sacrifice his peace requires.—
Let us be gone with speed, that he may hear
These joyful tidings from no lips but mine.
[*Exeunt* IDONEA *and* Pilgrims.

SCENE—*The Area of a half-ruined Castle—on one side the entrance to a dungeon*—OSWALD *and* MARMADUKE *pacing backwards and forwards*

MAR. 'Tis a wild night.
OSW. I'd give my cloak and bonnet
For sight of a warm fire.
MAR. The wind blows keen;
My hands are numb.
OSW. Ha! ha! 'tis nipping cold.
[*Blowing his fingers.*
I long for news of our brave Comrades; Lacy
Would drive those Scottish Rovers to their dens
If once they blew a horn this side the Tweed.
MAR. I think I see a second range of Towers;
This castle has another Area—come,
Let us examine it.

Osw. 'Tis a bitter night;
I hope Idonea is well housed. That horseman,
Who at full speed swept by us where the wood
Roared in the tempest, was within an ace
Of sending to his grave our precious Charge:
That would have been a vile mischance.
MAR. It would.
Osw. Justice had been most cruelly defrauded.
MAR. Most cruelly.
Osw. As up the steep we clomb,
I saw a distant fire in the north-east;
I took it for the blaze of Cheviot Beacon:
With proper speed our quarters may be gained
To-morrow evening.
[*Looks restlessly towards the mouth of the dungeon.*
MAR. When, upon the plank,
I had led him 'cross the torrent, his voice blessed me:
You could not hear, for the foam beat the rocks
With deafening noise,—the benediction fell
Back on himself; but changed into a curse.
Osw. As well indeed it might.
MAR. And this you deem
The fittest place?
Osw. (*aside*). He is growing pitiful.
MAR. (*listening*). What an odd moaning that is!—
Osw. Mighty odd
The wind should pipe a little, while we stand
Cooling our heels in this way!—I'll begin
And count the stars.
MAR. (*still listening*). That dog of his, you are sure,
Could not come after us—he *must* have perished;
The torrent would have dashed an oak to splinters.
You said you did not like his looks—that he
Would trouble us; if he were here again,
I swear the sight of him would quail me more
Than twenty armies.
Osw. How?
MAR. The old blind Man,
When you had told him the mischance, was troubled
Even to the shedding of some natural tears
Into the torrent over which he hung,
Listening in vain.
Osw. He has a tender heart!
[OSWALD *offers to go down into the dungeon.*
MAR. How now, what mean you?
Osw. Truly, I was going

To waken our stray Baron. Were there not
A farm or dwelling-house within five leagues,
We should deserve to wear a cap and bells,
Three good round years, for playing the fool here
In such a night as this.

MAR. Stop, stop.

OSW. Perhaps,
You 'd better like we should descend together,
And lie down by his side—what say you to it?
Three of us—we should keep each other warm:
I 'll answer for it that our four-legged friend
Shall not disturb us; further I 'll not engage;
Come, come, for manhood's sake!

MAR. These drowsy shiverings,
This mortal stupor which is creeping over me,
What do they mean? were this my single body
Opposed to armies, not a nerve would tremble:
Why do I tremble now?—Is not the depth
Of this Man's crimes beyond the reach of thought?
And yet, in plumbing the abyss for judgment,
Something I strike upon which turns my mind
Back on herself, I think, again—my breast
Concentres all the terrors of the Universe:
I look at him and tremble like a child.

OSW. Is it possible?

MAR. One thing you noticed not:
Just as we left the glen a clap of thunder
Burst on the mountains with hell-rousing force.
This is a time, said he, when guilt may shudder;
But there 's a Providence for them who walk
In helplessness, when innocence is with them.
At this audacious blasphemy, I thought
The spirit of vengeance seemed to ride the air.

OSW. Why are you not the man you were that moment?

[*He draws* MARMADUKE *to the dungeon.*

MAR. You say he was asleep,—look at this arm,
And tell me if 'tis fit for such a work.
Oswald, Oswald! [*Leans upon* OSWALD.

OSW. This is some sudden seizure!

MAR. A most strange faintness,—will you hunt me out
A draught of water?

OSW. Nay, to see you thus
Moves me beyond my bearing.—I will try
To gain the torrent's brink.

[*Exit* OSWALD.

MAR. (*after a pause*). It seems an age
Since that Man left me.—No, I am not lost.

HER. (*at the mouth of the dungeon*). Give me your hand;
where are you, Friends? and tell me
How goes the night.
MAR. 'Tis hard to measure time,
In such a weary night, and such a place.
HER. I do not hear the voice of my friend Oswald.
MAR. A minute past, he went to fetch a draught
Of water from the torrent. 'Tis, you 'll say,
A cheerless beverage.
HER. How good it was in you
To stay behind!—Hearing at first no answer,
I was alarmed.
MAR. No wonder; this is a place
That well may put some fears into *your* heart.
HER. Why so? a roofless rock had been a comfort,
Storm-beaten and bewildered as we were;
And in a night like this to lend your cloaks
To make a bed for me!—My Girl will weep
When she is told of it.
MAR. This Daughter of yours
Is very dear to you.
HER. Oh! but you are young;
Over your head twice twenty years must roll,
With all their natural weight of sorrow and pain,
Ere can be known to you how much a Father
May love his Child.
MAR. Thank you, old Man, for this!
[*Aside.*
HER. Fallen am I, and worn out, a useless Man;
Kindly have you protected me to-night,
And no return have I to make but prayers;
May you in age be blest with such a daughter!—
When from the Holy Land I had returned
Sightless, and from my heritage was driven,
A wretched Outcast—but this strain of thought
Would lead me to talk fondly.
MAR. Do not fear;
Your words are precious to my ears; go on.
HER. You will forgive me, but my heart runs over.
When my old Leader slipped into the flood
And perished, what a piercing outcry you
Sent after him. I have loved you ever since.
You start—where are we?
MAR. Oh, there is no danger;
The cold blast struck me.
HER. 'Twas a foolish question.
MAR. But when you were an Outcast?—Heaven is just;

Your piety would not miss its due reward;
The little Orphan then would be your succour,
And do good service, though she knew it not.
HER. I turned me from the dwellings of my Fathers,
Where none but those who trampled on my rights
Seemed to remember me. To the wide world
I bore her, in my arms; her looks won pity;
She was my Raven in the wilderness,
And brought me food. Have I not cause to love her?
MAR. Yes.
HER. More than ever Parent loved a Child?
MAR. Yes, yes.
HER. I will not murmur, merciful God!
I will not murmur; blasted as I have been,
Thou hast left me ears to hear my Daughter's voice,
And arms to fold her to my heart. Submissively
Thee I adore, and find my rest in faith.
Enter OSWALD
OSW. Herbert!—confusion! (*aside*). Here it is, my Friend,
[*Presents the Horn.*
A charming beverage for you to carouse,
This bitter night.
HER. Ha! Oswald! ten bright crosses
I would have given, not many minutes gone,
To have heard your voice.
OSW. Your couch, I fear, good Baron,
Has been but comfortless; and yet that place,
When the tempestuous wind first drove us hither,
Felt warm as a wren's nest. You 'd better turn
And under covert rest till break of day,
Or till the storm abate.
(*To* MARMADUKE *aside*). He has restored you.
No doubt you have been nobly entertained?
But soft!—how came he forth? The Night-mare Conscience
Has driven him out of harbour?
MAR. I believe
You have guessed right.
HER. The trees renew their murmur:
Come, let us house together.
[OSWALD *conducts him to the dungeon.*
OSW. (*returns*). Had I not
Esteemed you worthy to conduct the affair
To its most fit conclusion, do you think
I would so long have struggled with my Nature,
And smothered all that 's man in me?—away!—
[*Looking towards the dungeon*

This man 's the property of him who best
Can feel his crimes. I have resigned a privilege ;
It now becomes my duty to resume it.
MAR. Touch not a finger——
OSW. What then must be done ?
MAR. Which way soe'er I turn, I am perplexed.
OSW. Now, on my life, I grieve for you. The misery
Of doubt is insupportable. Pity, the facts
Did not admit of stronger evidence ;
Twelve honest men, plain men, would set us right ;
Their verdict would abolish these weak scruples.
MAR. Weak ! I am weak—there does my torment lie,
Feeding itself.
OSW. Verily, when he said
How his old heart would leap to hear her steps,
You thought his voice the echo of Idonea's.
MAR. And never heard a sound so terrible.
OSW. Perchance you think so now ?
MAR. I cannot do it :
Twice did I spring to grasp his withered throat,
When such a sudden weakness fell upon me,
I could have dropped asleep upon his breast.
OSW. Justice—is there not thunder in the word ?
Shall it be law to stab the petty robber
Who aims but at our purse ; and shall this Parricide—
Worse is he far, far worse (if foul dishonour
Be worse than death) to that confiding Creature
Whom he to more than filial love and duty
Hath falsely trained—shall he fulfil his purpose ?
But you are fallen.
MAR. Fallen should I be indeed—
Murder—perhaps asleep, blind, old, alone,
Betrayed, in darkness ! Here to strike the blow—
Away ! away !—— [*Flings away his sword.*
OSW. Nay, I have done with you :
We 'll lead him to the Convent. He shall live,
And she shall love him. With unquestioned title
He shall be seated in his Barony,
And we too chant the praise of his good deeds.
I now perceive we do mistake our masters,
And most despise the men who best can teach us :
Henceforth it shall be said that bad men only
Are brave : Clifford is brave ; and that old Man
Is brave. [*Taking* MARMADUKE'S *sword and giving it to him.*
To Clifford's arms he would have led
His Victim—haply to this desolate house.
MAR. (*advancing to the dungeon*). It must be ended !—

Osw. Softly; do not rouse him;
He will deny it to the last. He lies
Within the Vault, a spear's length to the left.
[MARMADUKE *descends to the dungeon.*
(*Alone*). The Villains rose in mutiny to destroy me;
I could have quelled the Cowards, but this Stripling
Must needs step in, and save my life. The look
With which he gave the boon—I see it now!
The same that tempted me to loathe the gift.—
For this old venerable Grey-beard—faith
'Tis his own fault if he hath got a face
Which doth play tricks with them that look on it:
'Twas this that put it in my thoughts—that countenance—
His staff—his figure—Murder!—what, of whom?
We kill a worn-out horse, and who but women
Sigh at the deed? Hew down a withered tree,
And none look grave but dotards. He may live
To thank me for this service. Rainbow arches,
Highways of dreaming passion, have too long,
Young as he is, diverted wish and hope
From the unpretending ground we mortals tread;—
Then shatter the delusion, break it up
And set him free. What follows? I have learned
That things will work to ends the slaves o' the world
Do never dream of. I *have* been what he—
This Boy—when he comes forth with bloody hands—
Might envy, and am now,—but he shall know
What I am now— [*Goes and listens at the dungeon.*
Praying or parleying?—tut!
Is he not eyeless? He has been half-dead
These fifteen years——

Enter female Beggar *with two or three of her Companions*

(*Turning abruptly*). *Ha! speak*—what Thing art thou?
(*Recognises her*). Heavens! my good Friend! [*To her.*
BEG. Forgive me, gracious Sir!—
Osw. (*to her companions*). Begone, ye slaves, or I will raise
a whirlwind
And send ye dancing to the clouds, like leaves.
[*They retire affrighted.*
BEG. Indeed we meant no harm; we lodge sometimes
In this deserted Castle—*I repent me.*
[OSWALD *goes to the dungeon—listens—returns to the* Beggar.
Osw. Woman, thou hast a helpless Infant—keep
Thy secret for its sake, or verily
That wretched life of thine shall be the forfeit.

BEG. I *do* repent me, Sir; I fear the curse
Of that blind Man. 'Twas not your money, Sir,——
OSW. Begone!
BEG. (*going*). There is some wicked deed in hand: [*Aside.*
Would I could find the old Man and his Daughter.
[*Exit* Beggar.

MARMADUKE *re-enters from the dungeon*

OSW. It is all over then;—your foolish fears
Are hushed to sleep, by your own act and deed,
Made quiet as he is.
MAR. Why came you down?
And when I felt your hand upon my arm
And spake to you, why did you give no answer?
Feared you to waken him? he must have been
In a deep sleep. I whispered to him thrice.
There are the strangest echoes in that place!
OSW. Tut! let them gabble till the day of doom.
MAR. Scarcely, by groping, had I reached the Spot,
When round my wrist I felt a cord drawn tight,
As if the blind Man's dog were pulling at it.
OSW. But after that?
MAR. The features of Idonea
Lurked in his face——
OSW. Psha! Never to these eyes
Will retribution show itself again
With aspect so inviting. Why forbid me
To share your triumph?
MAR. Yes, her very look,
Smiling in sleep——
OSW. A pretty feat of Fancy!
MAR. Though but a glimpse, it sent me to my prayers.
OSW. Is he alive?
MAR. What mean you? who alive?
OSW. Herbert! since you will have it, Baron Herbert;
He who will gain his Seignory when Idonea
Hath become Clifford's harlot—is *he* living?
MAR. The old Man in that dungeon *is* alive.
OSW. Henceforth, then, will I never in camp or field
Obey you more. Your weakness, to the Band,
Shall be proclaimed: brave Men, they all shall hear it.
You a protector of humanity!
Avenger you of outraged innocence!
MAR. 'Twas dark—dark as the grave; yet did I see,
Saw him—his face turned toward me; and I tell thee
Idonea's filial countenance was there
To baffle me—it put me to my prayers.

Upwards I cast my eyes, and, through a crevice,
Beheld a star twinkling above my head,
And, by the living God, I could not do it.
[*Sinks exhausted.*
Osw. (*to himself*). Now may I perish if this turn do more
Than make me change my course.
(*To* Marmaduke). Dear Marmaduke,
My words were rashly spoken; I recall them:
I feel my error; shedding human blood
Is a most serious thing.
Mar. Not I alone,
Thou too art deep in guilt.
Osw. We have indeed
Been most presumptuous. There *is* guilt in this,
Else could so strong a mind have ever known
These trepidations? Plain it is that Heaven
Has marked out this foul Wretch as one whose crimes
Must never come before a mortal judgment-seat,
Or be chastised by mortal instruments.
Mar. A thought that 's worth a thousand worlds!
[*Goes towards the dungeon.*
Osw. I grieve
That, in my zeal, I have caused you so much pain.
Mar. Think not of that! 'tis over—we are safe.
Osw. (*as if to himself, yet speaking aloud*). The truth is hideous,
but how stifle it? [*Turning to* Marmaduke.
Give me your sword—nay, here are stones and fragments,
The least of which would beat out a man's brains;
Or you might drive your head against that wall.
No! this is not the place to hear the tale:
It should be told you pinioned in your bed,
Or on some vast and solitary plain
Blown to you from a trumpet.
Mar. Why talk thus?
Whate'er the monster brooding in your breast
I care not: fear I have none, and cannot fear——
[*The sound of a horn is heard.*
That horn again—'Tis some one of our Troop;
What do they here? Listen!
Osw. What! dogged like thieves!

Enter Wallace *and* Lacy, etc.

Lacy. You are found at last, thanks to the vagrant Troop
For not misleading us.
Osw. (*looking at* Wallace). That subtle Grey-beard—
I 'd rather see my father's ghost.

LACY (*to* MARMADUKE). My Captain,
We come by order of the Band. Belike
You have not heard that Henry has at last
Dissolved the Barons' League, and sent abroad
His Sheriffs with fit force to reinstate
The genuine owners of such Lands and Baronies
As, in these long commotions, have been seized.
His Power is this way tending. It befits us
To stand upon our guard, and with our swords
Defend the innocent.
MAR. Lacy! we look
But at the surfaces of things; we hear
Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;
Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure
That flatters us, because it asks not thought:
The deeper malady is better hid;
The world is poisoned at the heart.
LACY. What mean you?
WAL. (*whose eye has been fixed suspiciously upon* OSWALD). Ay, what is it you mean?
MAR. Harkee, my Friends;—
[*Appearing gay.*
Were there a Man who, being weak and helpless
And most forlorn, should bribe a Mother, pressed
By penury, to yield him up her Daughter,
A little Infant, and instruct the Babe,
Prattling upon his knee, to call him Father——
LACY. Why, if his heart be tender, that offence
I could forgive him.
MAR. (*going on*). And should he make the Child
An instrument of falsehood, should he teach her
To stretch her arms, and dim the gladsome light
Of infant playfulness with piteous looks
Of misery that was not——
LACY. Troth, 'tis hard—
But in a world like ours——
MAR. (*changing his tone*). This self-same Man—
Even while he printed kisses on the cheek
Of this poor Babe, and taught its innocent tongue
To lisp the name of Father—could he look
To the unnatural harvest of that time
When he should give her up, a Woman grown,
To him who bid the highest in the market
Of foul pollution——
LACY. The whole visible world
Contains not such a Monster!

MAR. For this purpose
Should he resolve to taint her Soul by means
Which bathe the limbs in sweat to think of them;
Should he, by tales which would draw tears from iron,
Work on her nature, and so turn compassion
And gratitude to ministers of vice,
And make the spotless spirit of filial love
Prime mover in a plot to damn his Victim
Both soul and body——
WAL. 'Tis too horrible;
Oswald, what say you to it?
LACY. Hew him down,
And fling him to the ravens.
MAR. But his aspect,
It is so meek, his countenance so venerable.
WAL. (*with an appearance of mistrust*). But how, what say you, Oswald?
LACY (*at the same moment*). Stab him, were it
Before the Altar.
MAR. What, if he were sick,
Tottering upon the very verge of life,
And old, and blind——
LACY. Blind, say you?
OSW. (*coming forward*). Are we Men,
Or own we baby Spirits? Genuine courage
Is not an accidental quality,
A thing dependent for its casual birth
On opposition and impediment.
Wisdom, if Justice speak the word, beats down
The giant's strength; and, at the voice of Justice,
Spares not the worm. The giant and the worm—
She weighs them in one scale. The wiles of woman,
And craft of age, seducing reason, first
Made weakness a protection, and obscured
The moral shapes of things. His tender cries
And helpless innocence—do they protect
The infant lamb? and shall the infirmities,
Which have enabled this enormous Culprit
To perpetrate his crimes, serve as a Sanctuary
To cover him from punishment? Shame!—Justice,
Admitting no resistance, bends alike
The feeble and the strong. She needs not here
Her bonds and chains, which make the mighty feeble.
—We recognise in this old Man a victim
Prepared already for the sacrifice.
LACY. By heaven, his words are reason!

Osw. Yes, my Friends,
His countenance is meek and venerable;
And, by the Mass, to see him at his prayers!—
I am of flesh and blood, and may I perish
When my heart does not ache to think of it!—
Poor Victim! not a virtue under heaven
But what was made an engine to ensnare thee;
But yet I trust, Idonea, thou art safe.
LACY. Idonea!
WAL. How! what? your Idonea?
[*To* MARMADUKE.
MAR. *Mine*;
But now no longer mine. You know Lord Clifford;
He is the Man to whom the Maiden—pure
As beautiful, and gentle and benign,
And in her ample heart loving even me—
Was to be yielded up.
LACY. Now, by the head
Of my own child, this Man must die; my hand,
A worthier wanting, shall itself entwine
In his grey hairs!—
MAR. (*to* LACY). I love the Father in thee.
You know me, Friends; I have a heart to feel,
And I have felt, more than perhaps becomes me
Or duty sanctions.
LACY. We will have ample justice.
Who are we, Friends? Do we not live on ground
Where Souls are self-defended, free to grow
Like mountain oaks rocked by the stormy wind.
Mark the Almighty Wisdom, which decreed
This monstrous crime to be laid open—*here*,
Where Reason has an eye that she can use,
And Men alone are Umpires. To the Camp
He shall be led, and there, the Country round
All gathered to the spot, in open day
Shall Nature be avenged.
Osw. 'Tis nobly thought;
His death will be a monument for ages.
MAR. (*to* LACY). I thank you for that hint. He shall be brought
Before the Camp, and would that best and wisest
Of every country might be present. There
His crime shall be proclaimed; and for the rest
It shall be done as Wisdom shall decide:
Meanwhile, do you two hasten back and see
That all is well prepared.

WAL. We will obey you.
(*Aside*). But softly! we must look a little nearer.
MAR. Tell where you found us. At some future time
I will explain the cause. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III

SCENE—*The door of the Hostel, a group of* Pilgrims *as before;* IDONEA *and the* Host *among them*

HOST. Lady, you 'll find your Father at the Convent
As I have told you: He left us yesterday
With two Companions; one of them, as seemed,
His most familiar Friend. (*Going.*) There was a letter
Of which I heard them speak, but that I fancy
Has been forgotten.
IDON. (*to* Host). Farewell!
HOST. Gentle pilgrims,
St. Cuthbert speed you on your holy errand.
[*Exeunt* IDONEA *and* Pilgrims.

SCENE—*A desolate Moor*

OSWALD (*alone*)

OSW. Carry him to the Camp! Yes, to the Camp.
Oh, Wisdom! a most wise resolve! and then,
That half a word should blow it to the winds!
This last device must end my work.—Methinks
It were a pleasant pastime to construct
A scale and table of belief—as thus—
Two columns, one for passion, one for proof;
Each rises as the other falls: and first,
Passion a unit and *against* us—proof—
Nay, we must travel in another path,
Or we 're stuck fast for ever;—passion, then,
Shall be a unit *for* us; proof—no, passion!
We 'll not insult thy majesty by time,
Person, and place—the where, the when, the how,
And all particulars that dull brains require
To constitute the spiritless shape of Fact,
They bow to, calling the idol, Demonstration.
A whipping to the Moralists who preach
That misery is a sacred thing: for me,
I know no cheaper engine to degrade a man,
Nor any half so sure. This Stripling's mind

Is shaken till the dregs float on the surface;
And, in the storm and anguish of the heart,
He talks of a transition in his Soul,
And dreams that he is happy. We dissect
The senseless body, and why not the mind?—
These are strange sights—the mind of man, upturned,
Is in all natures a strange spectacle;
In some a hideous one—hem! shall I stop?
No.—Thoughts and feelings will sink deep, but then
They have no substance. Pass but a few minutes,
And something shall be done which Memory
May touch, whene'er her Vassals are at work.

Enter MARMADUKE, *from behind*

OSW. (*turning to meet him*). But listen, for my peace——
MAR. Why, I *believe* you.
OSW. But hear the proofs——
MAR. Ay, prove that when two peas
Lie snugly in a pod, the pod must then
Be larger than the peas—prove this—'twere matter
Worthy the hearing. Fool was I to dream
It ever could be otherwise!
OSW. Last night,
When I returned with water from the brook,
I overheard the Villains—every word
Like red-hot iron burnt into my heart.
Said one, 'It is agreed on. The blind Man
Shall feign a sudden illness, and the Girl,
Who on her journey must proceed alone,
Under pretence of violence, be seized.
She is,' continued the detested Slave,
'She is right willing—strange if she were not!—
They say, Lord Clifford is a savage man;
But, faith, to see him in his silken tunic,
Fitting his low voice to the minstrel's harp,
There 's witchery in 't. I never knew a maid
That could withstand it. True,' continued he,
'When we arranged the affair, she wept a little
(Not the less welcome to my Lord for that)
And said, "My Father he will have it so."'
MAR. I am your hearer.
OSW. This I caught, and more
That may not be retold to any ear.
The obstinate bolt of a small iron door
Detained them near the gateway of the Castle.
By a dim lantern's light I saw that wreaths

Of flowers were in their hands, as if designed
For festive decoration; and they said,
With brutal laughter and most foul allusion,
That they should share the banquet with their Lord
And his new Favorite.

MAR. Misery!—

OSW. I knew
How you would be disturbed by this dire news,
And therefore chose this solitary Moor,
Here to impart the tale, of which, last night,
I strove to ease my mind, when our two Comrades,
Commissioned by the Band, burst in upon us.

MAR. Last night, when moved to lift the avenging steel,
I did believe all things were shadows—yea,
Living or dead all things were bodiless,
Or but the mutual mockeries of body,
Till that same star summoned me back again.
Now I could laugh till my ribs ached. Oh Fool!
To let a creed, built in the heart of things,
Dissolve before a twinkling atom!—Oswald,
I could fetch lessons out of wiser schools
Than you have entered, were it worth the pains.
Young as I am, I might go forth a teacher,
And you should see how deeply I could reason
Of love in all its shapes, beginnings, ends;
Of moral qualities in their diverse aspects;
Of actions, and their laws and tendencies.

OSW. You take it as it merits——

MAR. One a King,
General or Cham, Sultan or Emperor,
Strews twenty acres of good meadow-ground
With carcases, in lineament and shape
And substance, nothing differing from his own,
But that they cannot stand up of themselves;
Another sits i' th' sun, and by the hour
Floats kingcups in the brook—a Hero one
We call, and scorn the other as Time's spendthrift
But have they not a world of common ground
To occupy—both fools, or wise alike,
Each in his way?

OSW. Troth, I begin to think so.

MAR. Now for the corner-stone of my philosophy:
I would not give a denier for the man
Who, on such provocation as this earth
Yields, could not chuck his babe beneath the chin,
And send it with a fillip to its grave.

OSW. Nay, you leave me behind.

MAR. That such a One,
So pious in demeanour! in his look
So saintly and so pure!——Hark'ee, my Friend,
I 'll plant myself before Lord Clifford's Castle,
A surly mastiff kennels at the gate,
And he shall howl and I will laugh, a medley
Most tunable.
OSW. In faith, a pleasant scheme;
But take your sword along with you, for that
Might in such neighbourhood find seemly use.—
But first, how wash our hands of this old Man?
MAR. Oh yes, that mole, that viper in the path;
Plague on my memory, him I had forgotten.
OSW. You know we left him sitting—see him yonder.
MAR. Ha! ha!—
OSW. As 'twill be but a moment's work,
I will stroll on; you follow when 'tis done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to another part of the Moor at a short distance*—HERBERT *is discovered seated on a stone*

HER. A sound of laughter, too!—'tis well—I feared,
The Stranger had some pitiable sorrow
Pressing upon his solitary heart.
Hush!—'tis the feeble and earth-loving wind
That creeps along the bells of the crisp heather.
Alas! 'tis cold—I shiver in the sunshine—
What can this mean? There is a psalm that speaks
Of God's parental mercies—with Idonea
I used to sing it.—Listen!—what foot is there?

Enter MARMADUKE

MAR. (*aside—looking at* HERBERT). And I have loved this Man! and *she* hath loved him!
And I loved her, and she loves the Lord Clifford!
And there it ends;—if this be not enough
To make mankind merry for evermore,
Then plain it is as day, that eyes were made
For a wise purpose—verily to weep with! [*Looking round.*
A pretty prospect this, a masterpiece
Of Nature, finished with most curious skill!
(*To* HERBERT). Good Baron, have you ever practised tillage?
Pray tell me what this land is worth by the acre.
HER. How glad I am to hear your voice! I know not
Wherein I have offended you;—last night

I found in you the kindest of Protectors;
This morning, when I spoke of weariness,
You from my shoulder took my scrip and threw it
About your own; but for these two hours past
Once only have you spoken, when the lark
Whirred from among the fern beneath our feet,
And I, no coward in my better days,
Was almost terrified.

MAR. That 's excellent!—
So, you bethought you of the many ways
In which a man may come to his end, whose crimes
Have roused all Nature up against him—pshaw!—

HER. For mercy's sake, is nobody in sight?
No traveller, peasant, herdsman?

MAR. Not a soul:
Here is a tree, raggèd, and bent, and bare,
That turns its goat's-beard flakes of pea-green moss
From the stern breathing of the rough sea-wind;
This have we, but no other company:
Commend me to the place. If a man should die
And leave his body here, it were all one
As he were twenty fathoms underground.

HER. Where is our common Friend?

MAR. A ghost, methinks—
The Spirit of a murdered man, for instance—
Might have fine room to ramble about here,
A grand domain to squeak and gibber in.

HER. Lost Man! if thou have any close-pent guilt
Pressing upon thy heart, and this the hour
Of visitation——

MAR. A bold word from *you*!

HER. Restore him, Heaven!

MAR. The desperate Wretch!—A Flower,
Fairest of all flowers, was she once, but now
They have snapped her from the stem—Poh! let her lie
Besoiled with mire, and let the houseless snail
Feed on her leaves. You knew her well—ay, there,
Old Man! you were a very Lynx, you knew
The worm was in her——

HER. Mercy! Sir, what mean you?

MAR. You have a Daughter!

HER. Oh that she were here!—
She hath an eye that sinks into all hearts,
And if I have in aught offended you,
Soon would her gentle voice make peace between us.

MAR. (*aside*). I do believe he weeps—I could weep too—

There is a vein of her voice that runs through his:
Even such a Man my fancy bodied forth
From the first moment that I loved the Maid;
And for his sake I loved her more: these tears—
I did not think that aught was left in me
Of what I have been—yes, I thank thee, Heaven!
One happy thought has passed across my mind.
—It may not be—I am cut off from man;
No more shall I be man—no more shall I
Have human feelings!—(*To* HERBERT)—Now, for a little more
About your Daughter!

HER. Troops of armed men,
Met in the roads, would bless us; little children,
Rushing along in the full tide of play,
Stood silent as we passed them! I have heard
The boisterous carman, in the miry road,
Check his loud whip and hail us with mild voice,
And speak with milder voice to his poor beasts.

MAR. And whither were you going?

HER. Learn, young Man,—
To fear the virtuous, and reverence misery,
Whether too much for patience, or, like mine,
Softened till it becomes a gift of mercy.

MAR. Now, this is as it should be!

HER. I am weak!—
My Daughter does not know how weak I am;
And, as thou see'st, under the arch of heaven
Here do I stand, alone, to helplessness,
By the good God, our common Father, doomed!—
But I had once a spirit and an arm——

MAR. Now, for a word about your Barony:
I fancy when you left the Holy Land,
And came to—what's your title—eh? your claims
Were undisputed!

HER. Like a mendicant,
Whom no one comes to meet, I stood alone;—
I murmured—but, remembering Him who feeds
The pelican and ostrich of the desert,
From my own threshold I looked up to Heaven
And did not want glimmerings of quiet hope.
So, from the court I passed, and down the brook,
Led by its murmur, to the ancient oak
I came; and when I felt its cooling shade,
I sate me down, and cannot but believe—
While in my lap I held my little Babe
And clasped her to my heart, my heart that ached

More with delight than grief—I heard a voice
Such as by Cherith on Elijah called;
It said, 'I will be with thee.' A little boy,
A shepherd-lad, ere yet my trance was gone,
Hailed us as if he had been sent from heaven,
And said, with tears, that he would be our guide:
I had a better guide—that innocent Babe—
Her, who hath saved me, to this hour, from harm,
From cold, from hunger, penury, and death;
To whom I owe the best of all the good
I have, or wish for, upon earth—and more
And higher far than lies within earth's bounds:
Therefore I bless her: when I think of Man,
I bless her with sad spirit,—when of God,
I bless her in the fulness of my joy!

MAR. The name of daughter in his mouth, he prays!
With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff.—Innocent!—
If he were innocent—then he would tremble
And be disturbed, as I am. (*Turning aside*). I have read
In Story, what men now alive have witnessed,
How, when the People's mind was racked with doubt,
Appeal was made to the great Judge: the Accused
With naked feet walked over burning ploughshares.
Here is a Man by Nature's hand prepared
For a like trial, but more merciful.
Why else have I been led to this bleak Waste?
Bare is it, without house or track, and destitute
Of obvious shelter, as a shipless sea.
Here will I leave him—here—All-seeing God!
Such as *he* is, and sore perplexed as I am,
I will commit him to this final *Ordeal*!—
He heard a voice—a shepherd-lad came to him
And was his guide; if once, why not again,
And in this desert? If never—then the whole
Of what he says, and looks, and does, and is,
Makes up one damning falsehood. Leave him here
To cold and hunger!—Pain is of the heart,
And what are a few throes of bodily suffering
If they can waken one pang of remorse?
[*Goes up to* HERBERT.
Old Man! my wrath is as a flame burnt out,
It cannot be rekindled. Thou art here
Led by my hand to save thee from perdition;
Thou wilt have time to breathe and think——

HER. Oh, Mercy!

MAR. I know the need that all men have of mercy,
And therefore leave thee to a righteous judgment.
HER. My Child, my blessèd Child!
MAR. No more of that;
Thou wilt have many guides if thou art innocent;
Yea, from the utmost corners of the earth,
That Woman will come o'er this Waste to save thee.
[*He pauses and looks at* HERBERT'S *staff.*
Ha! what is here? and carved by her own hand!
[*Reads upon the staff.*
'I am eyes to the blind, saith the Lord.
He that puts his trust in me shall not fail!'
Yes, be it so;—repent and be forgiven—
God and that staff are now thy only guides.
[*He leaves* HERBERT *on the Moor*

SCENE—*An eminence, a Beacon on the summit*

LACY, WALLACE, LENNOX, etc. etc.

SEVERAL OF THE BAND (*confusedly*). But patience!
ONE OF THE BAND. Curses on that Traitor, Oswald!—
Our Captain made a prey to foul device!—
LEN. (*to* WALLACE). His tool, the wandering Beggar, made last night
A plain confession, such as leaves no doubt,
Knowing what otherwise we know too well,
That she revealed the truth. Stand by me now;
For rather would I have a nest of vipers
Between my breast-plate and my skin, than make
Oswald my special enemy, if you
Deny me your support.
LACY. We have been fooled—
But for the motive?
WAL. Natures such as his
Spin motives out of their own bowels, Lacy!
I learn'd this when I was a Confessor.
I know him well; there needs no other motive
Than that most strange incontinence in crime
Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life to him
And breath and being; where he cannot govern,
He will destroy.
LACY. To have been trapped like moles!—
Yes, you are right, we need not hunt for motives:
There is no crime from which this man would shrink;
He recks not human law; and I have noticed

That often, when the name of God is uttered,
A sudden blankness overspreads his face.
LEN. Yet, reasoner as he is, his pride has built
Some uncouth superstition of its own.
WAL. I have seen traces of it.
LEN. Once he headed
A band of Pirates in the Norway seas;
And when the King of Denmark summoned him
To the oath of fealty, I well remember,
'Twas a strange answer that he made; he said,
'I hold of Spirits, and the Sun in heaven.'
LACY. He is no madman.
WAL. A most subtle doctor
Were that man, who could draw the line that parts
Pride and her daughter, Cruelty, from Madness,
That should be scourged, not pitied. Restless Minds,
Such Minds as find amid their fellow-men
No heart that loves them, none that they can love,
Will turn perforce and seek for sympathy
In dim relation to imagined Beings.
ONE OF THE BAND. What if he mean to offer up our Captain
An expiation and a sacrifice
To those infernal fiends!
WAL. Now, if the event
Should be as Lennox has foretold, then swear,
My Friends, his heart shall have as many wounds
As there are daggers here.
LACY. What need of swearing!
ONE OF THE BAND. Let us away!
ANOTHER. Away!
A THIRD. Hark! how the horns
Of those Scotch Rovers echo through the vale.
LACY. Stay you behind; and when the sun is down,
Light up this beacon.
ONE OF THE BAND. You shall be obeyed.
[*They go out together.*

SCENE—*The Wood on the edge of the Moor*

MARMADUKE (*alone*)

MAR. Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human thought,
Yet calm.—I could believe, that there was here
The only quiet heart on earth. In terror,
Remembered terror, there is peace and rest.

Enter OSWALD

OSW. Ha! my dear Captain.

MAR. A later meeting, Oswald,
Would have been better timed.
OSW. Alone, I see;
You have done your duty. I had hopes, which now
I feel that you will justify.
MAR. I had fears,
From which I have freed myself—but 'tis my wish
To be alone, and therefore we must part.
OSW. Nay, then—I am mistaken. There 's a weakness
About you still; you talk of solitude—
I am your friend.
MAR. What need of this assurance
At any time? and why given now?
OSW. Because
You are now in truth my Master; you have taught me
What there is not another living man
Had strength to teach;—and therefore gratitude
Is bold, and would relieve itself by praise.
MAR. Wherefore press this on me?
OSW. Because I feel
That you have shown, and by a signal instance,
How they who would be just must seek the rule
By diving for it into their own bosoms.
To-day you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but in the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the musty rules
By which they uphold their craft from age to age:
You have obeyed the only law that sense
Submits to recognise; the immediate law,
From the clear light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent Intellect.
Henceforth new prospects open on your path;
Your faculties should grow with the demand;
I still will be your friend, will cleave to you
Through good and evil, obloquy and scorn,
Oft as they dare to follow on your steps.
MAR. I would be left alone.
OSW. (*exultingly*). I know your motives!
I am not of the world's presumptuous judges,
Who damn where they can neither see nor feel,
With a hard-hearted ignorance; your struggles
I witness'd, and now hail your victory.
MAR. Spare me awhile that greeting.
OSW. It may be,
That some there are, squeamish half-thinking cowards,
Who will turn pale upon you, call you murderer,

And you will walk in solitude among them.
A mighty evil for a strong-built mind!—
Join twenty tapers of unequal height
And light them joined, and you will see the less
How 'twill burn down the taller; and they all
Shall prey upon the tallest. Solitude!—
The Eagle lives in Solitude!

MAR. Even so,
The Sparrow so on the house-top, and I,
The weakest of God's creatures, stand resolved
To abide the issue of my act, alone.

OSW. *Now* would you? and for ever?—My young Friend,
As time advances either we become
The prey or masters of our own past deeds.
Fellowship we *must* have, willing or no;
And if good Angels fail, slack in their duty,
Substitutes, turn our faces where we may,
Are still forthcoming; some which, though they bear
Ill names, can render no ill services,
In recompense for what themselves required.
So meet extremes in this mysterious world,
And opposites thus melt into each other.

MAR. Time, since Man first drew breath, has never moved
With such a weight upon his wings as now;
But they will soon be lightened.

OSW. Ay, look up—
Cast round you your mind's eye, and you will learn
Fortitude is the child of Enterprise:
Great actions move our admiration, chiefly
Because they carry in themselves an earnest
That we can suffer greatly.

MAR. Very true.

OSW. Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And shares the nature of infinity.

MAR. Truth—and I feel it.

OSW. What! if you had bid
Eternal farewell to unmingled joy
And the light dancing of the thoughtless heart;
It is the toy of fools, and little fit
For such a world as this. The wise abjure
All thoughts whose idle composition lives
In the entire forgetfulness of pain.
—I see I have disturbed you.

MAR. By no means.
OSW. Compassion!—pity!—pride can do without them;
And what if you should never know them more!—
He is a puny soul who, feeling pain,
Finds ease because another feels it too.
If e'er I open out this heart of mine
It shall be for a nobler end—to teach
And not to purchase puling sympathy.
—Nay, you are pale.
MAR. It may be so.
OSW. Remorse—
It cannot live with thought; think on, think on,
And it will die. What! in this universe,
Where the least things control the greatest, where
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world;
What! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.
MAR. Now, whither are you wandering? That a man,
So used to suit his language to the time,
Should thus so widely differ from himself—
It is most strange.
OSW. Murder!—what 's in the word!—
I have no cases by me ready made
To fit all deeds. Carry him to the Camp!—
A shallow project;—you of late have seen
More deeply, taught us that the institutes
Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation
Banished from human intercourse, exist
Only in our relations to the brutes
That make the fields their dwelling. If a snake
Crawl from beneath our feet we do not ask
A license to destroy him: our good governors
Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
That bears the shape of man; and for what purpose,
But to protect themselves from extirpation?—
This flimsy barrier you have overleaped.
MAR. My Office is fulfilled—the Man is now
Delivered to the Judge of all things.
OSW. Dead!
MAR. I have borne my burthen to its destined end.
OSW. This instant we 'll return to our Companions—
Oh how I long to see their faces again!

Enter IDONEA, *with* Pilgrims *who continue their journey*

IDON. (*after some time*). What, Marmaduke! now thou art mine for ever.

And Oswald, too! (*To* MARMADUKE). On will we to my Father
With the glad tidings which this day hath brought;
We 'll go together, and, such proof received
Of his own rights restored, his gratitude
To God above will make him feel for ours.
OSW. I interrupt you?
IDON. Think not so.
MAR. Idonea,
That I should ever live to see this moment!
IDON. Forgive me.—Oswald knows it all—he knows,
Each word of that unhappy letter fell
As a blood-drop from my heart.
OSW. 'Twas even so.
MAR. I have much to say, but for whose ear?—not thine.
IDON. Ill can I bear that look—Plead for me, Oswald!
You are my Father's Friend. (*To* MARMADUKE). Alas, you know not,
And never *can* you know, how much he loved me.
Twice had he been to me a father, twice
Had given me breath, and was I not to be
His daughter, once his daughter? could I withstand
His pleading face, and feel his clasping arms,
And hear his prayer that I would not forsake him
In his old age—— [*Hides her face.*
MAR. Patience—Heaven grant me patience!—
She weeps, she weeps—*my* brain shall burn for hours
Ere *I* can shed a tear.
IDON. I was a woman;
And, balancing the hopes that are the dearest
To womankind with duty to my Father,
I yielded up those precious hopes, which nought
On earth could else have wrested from me;—if erring,
Oh let me be forgiven!
MAR. I *do* forgive thee.
IDON. But take me to your arms—this breast, alas!
It throbs, and you have a heart that does not feel it.
MAR. (*exultingly*). She is innocent. [*He embraces her.*
OSW. (*aside*). Were I a Moralist,
I should make wondrous revolution here;
It were a quaint experiment to show
The beauty of truth— [*Addressing them.*
I see I interrupt you;
I shall have business with you, Marmaduke; [*Exit* OSWALD.
Follow me to the Hostel.
IDON. Marmaduke,
This is a happy day. My Father soon

Shall sun himself before his native doors;
The lame, the hungry, will be welcome there.
No more shall he complain of wasted strength,
Of thoughts that fail, and a decaying heart;
His good works will be balm and life to him.
MAR. This is most strange!—I know not what it was,
But there was something which most plainly said,
That thou wert innocent.
IDON. How innocent!—
Oh heavens! you 've been deceived.
MAR. Thou art a Woman,
To bring perdition on the universe.
IDON. Already I 've been punished to the height
Of my offence. [*Smiling affectionately.*
I see you love me still,
The labours of my hand are still your joy;
Bethink you of the hour when on your shoulder
I hung this belt.
[*Pointing to the belt on which was suspended* HERBERT'S *scrip.*
MAR. Mercy of Heaven! [*Sinks.*
IDON. What ails you!
[*Distractedly.*
MAR. The scrip that held his food, and I forgot
To give it back again!
IDON. What mean your words?
MAR. I know not what I said—all may be well.
IDON. That smile hath life in it!
MAR. This road is perilous;
I will attend you to a Hut that stands
Near the wood's edge—rest there to-night, I pray you:
For me, I have business, as you heard, with Oswald,
But will return to you by break of day.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE—*A desolate prospect—a ridge of rocks—a Chapel on the summit of one — Moon behind the rocks — night stormy — irregular sound of a bell*—HERBERT *enters exhausted*

HER. That Chapel-bell in mercy seemed to guide me,
But now it mocks my steps; its fitful stroke
Can scarcely be the work of human hands.
Hear me, ye Men upon the cliffs, if such
There be who pray nightly before the Altar.
Oh that I had but strength to reach the place!

My Child—my Child—dark—dark—I faint—this wind—
These stifling blasts—God help me!

Enter ELDRED

ELD. Better this bare rock,
Though it were tottering over a man's head,
Than a tight case of dungeon walls for shelter
From such rough dealing. [*A moaning voice is heard.*
Ha! what sound is that?
Trees creaking in the wind (but none are here)
Send forth such noises—and that weary bell!
Surely some evil Spirit abroad to-night
Is ringing it—'twould stop a Saint in prayer,
And that—what is it? never was sound so like
A human groan. Ha! what is here? Poor Man—
Murdered! alas! speak—speak, I am your friend:
No answer—hush—lost wretch, he lifts his hand
And lays it to his heart—(*Kneels to him.*) I pray you speak!
What has befallen you?

HER. (*feebly*). A stranger has done this,
And in the arms of a stranger I must die.

ELD. Nay, think not so: come, let me raise you up:
[*Raises him.*
This is a dismal place—well—that is well—
I was too fearful—take me for your guide
And your support—my hut is not far off.
[*Draws him gently off the stage.*

SCENE—*A room in the Hostel*—MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD

MAR. But for Idonea!—I have cause to think
That she is innocent.

OSW. Leave that thought awhile,
As one of those beliefs which in their hearts
Lovers lock up as pearls, though oft no better
Than feathers clinging to their points of passion.
This day's event has laid on me the duty
Of opening out my story; you must hear it,
And without further preface.—In my youth,
Except for that abatement which is paid
By envy as a tribute to desert,
I was the pleasure of all hearts, the darling
Of every tongue—as you are now. You 've heard
That I embarked for Syria. On our voyage
Was hatched among the crew a foul Conspiracy
Against my honour, in the which our Captain

Was, I believed, prime Agent. The wind fell;
We lay becalmed week after week, until
The water of the vessel was exhausted;
I felt a double fever in my veins,
Yet rage suppressed itself;—to a deep stillness
Did my pride tame my pride;—for many days,
On a dead sea under a burning sky,
I brooded o'er my injuries, deserted
By man and nature;—if a breeze had blown,
It might have found its way into my heart,
And I had been—no matter—do you mark me?
MAR. Quick—to the point—if any untold crime
Doth haunt your memory.
OSW. Patience, hear me further!—
One day in silence did we drift at noon
By a bare rock, narrow, and white, and bare;
No food was there, no drink, no grass, no shade,
No tree, no jutting eminence, nor form
Inanimate large as the body of man,
Nor any living thing whose lot of life
Might stretch beyond the measure of one moon.
To dig for water on the spot, the Captain
Landed with a small troop, myself being one:
There I reproached him with his treachery.
Imperious at all times, his temper rose;
He struck me; and that instant had I killed him,
And put an end to his insolence, but my Comrades
Rushed in between us: then did I insist
(All hated him, and I was stung to madness)
That we should leave him there, alive!—we did so.
MAR. And he was famished?
OSW. Naked was the spot;
Methinks I see it now—how in the sun
Its stony surface glittered like a shield;
And in that miserable place we left him,
Alone but for a swarm of minute creatures
Not one of which could help him while alive,
Or mourn him dead.
MAR. A man by men cast off,
Left without burial! nay, not dead nor dying,
But standing, walking, stretching forth his arms,
In all things like ourselves, but in the agony
With which he called for mercy; and—even so—
He was forsaken?
OSW. There is a power in sounds:
The cries he uttered might have stopped the boat
That bore us through the water——

MAR. You returned
Upon that dismal hearing—did you not?
OSW. Some scoffed at him with hellish mockery,
And laughed so loud it seemed that the smooth sea
Did from some distant region echo us.
MAR. We all are of one blood, our veins are filled
At the same poisonous fountain!
OSW. 'Twas an island
Only by sufferance of the winds and waves,
Which with their foam could cover it at will.
I know not how he perished; but the calm,
The same dead calm, continued many days.
MAR. But his own crime had brought on him this doom,
His wickedness prepared it; these expedients
Are terrible, yet ours is not the fault.
OSW. The man was famished, and was innocent!
MAR. Impossible!
OSW. The man had never wronged me.
MAR. Banish the thought, crush it, and be at peace.
His guilt was marked—these things could never be
Were there not eyes that see, and for good ends,
Where ours are baffled.
OSW. I had been deceived.
MAR. And from that hour the miserable man
No more was heard of?
OSW. I had been betrayed.
MAR. And he found no deliverance!
OSW. The Crew
Gave me a hearty welcome; they had laid
The plot to rid themselves, at any cost,
Of a tyrannic Master whom they loathed.
So we pursued our voyage: when we landed,
The tale was spread abroad; my power at once
Shrunk from me; plans and schemes, and lofty hopes—
All vanished. I gave way—do you attend?
MAR. The Crew deceived you?
OSW. Nay, command yourself.
MAR. It is a dismal night—how the wind howls!
OSW. I hid my head within a Convent, there
Lay passive as a dormouse in mid winter.
That was no life for me—I was o'erthrown,
But not destroyed.
MAR. The proofs—you ought to have seen
The guilt—have touched it—felt it at your heart—
As I have done.
OSW. A fresh tide of Crusaders
Drove by the place of my retreat: three nights

Did constant meditation dry my blood;
Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way;
And, wheresoe'er I turned me, I beheld
A slavery compared to which the dungeon
And clanking chains are perfect liberty.
You understand me—I was comforted;
I saw that every possible shape of action
Might lead to good—I saw it and burst forth,
Thirsting for some of those exploits that fill
The earth for sure redemption of lost peace.
[*Marking* MARMADUKE's *countenance.*
Nay, you have had the worst. Ferocity
Subsided in a moment, like a wind
That drops down dead out of a sky it vexed.
And yet I had within me evermore
A salient spring of energy; I mounted
From action up to action with a mind
That never rested—without meat or drink
Have I lived many days—my sleep was bound
To purposes of reason—not a dream
But had a continuity and substance
That waking life had never power to give.

MAR. O wretched Human-kind!—Until the mystery
Of all this world is solved, well may we envy
The worm, that, underneath a stone whose weight
Would crush the lion's paw with mortal anguish,
Doth lodge, and feed, and coil, and sleep, in safety.
Fell not the wrath of Heaven upon those traitors?

OSW. Give not to them a thought. From Palestine
We marched to Syria: oft I left the Camp,
When all that multitude of hearts was still,
And followed on, through woods of gloomy cedar,
Into deep chasms troubled by roaring streams;
Or from the top of Lebanon surveyed
The moonlight desert, and the moonlight sea:
In these my lonely wanderings I perceived
What mighty objects do impress their forms
To elevate our intellectual being;
And felt, if ought on earth deserves a curse,
'Tis that worst principle of ill which dooms
A thing so great to perish self-consumed.
—So much for my remorse!

MAR. Unhappy man!

OSW. When from these forms I turned to contemplate
The world's opinions and her usages,
I seemed a Being who had passed alone

Into a region of futurity,
Whose natural element was freedom——
MAR. Stop—
I may not, cannot, follow thee.
OSW. You must.
I had been nourished by the sickly food
Of popular applause. I now perceived
That we are praised, only as men in us
Do recognise some image of themselves,
An abject counterpart of what they are,
Or the empty thing that they would wish to be.
I felt that merit has no surer test
Than obloquy; that, if we wish to serve
The world in substance, not deceive by show,
We must become obnoxious to its hate,
Or fear disguised in simulated scorn.
MAR. I pity, can forgive, you; but those wretches—
That monstrous perfidy!
OSW. Keep down your wrath.
False Shame discarded, spurious Fame despised,
Twin sisters both of Ignorance, I found
Life stretched before me smooth as some broad way
Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priests might spin
Their veil, but not for me—'twas in fit place
Among its kindred cobwebs. I had been,
And in that dream had left my native land,
One of Love's simple bondsmen—the soft chain
Was off for ever; and the men, from whom
This liberation came, you would destroy:
Join me in thanks for their blind services.
MAR. 'Tis a strange aching that, when we would curse
And cannot.—You have betrayed me—I have done—
I am content—I know that he is guiltless—
That both are guiltless, without spot or stain,
Mutually consecrated. Poor old Man!
And I had heart for this, because thou lovedst
Her who from very infancy had been
Light to thy path, warmth to thy blood!—Together
[*Turning to* OSWALD.
We propped his steps, he leaned upon us both.
OSW. Ay, we are coupled by a chain of adamant;
Let us be fellow-labourers, then, to enlarge
Man's intellectual empire. We subsist
In slavery; all is slavery; we receive
Laws, but we ask not whence those laws have come;
We need an inward sting to goad us on.
MAR. Have you betrayed me? Speak to that.

Osw. The mask,
Which for a season I have stooped to wear,
Must be cast off.—Know then that I was urged,
(For other impulse let it pass) was driven,
To seek for sympathy, because I saw
In you a mirror of my youthful self;
I would have made us equal once again,
But that was a vain hope. You have struck home,
With a few drops of blood cut short the business;
Therein for ever you must yield to me.
But what is done will save you from the blank
Of living without knowledge that you live:
Now you are suffering—for the future day,
'Tis his who will command it.—Think of my story—
Herbert is *innocent.*

Mar. (*in a faint voice, and doubtingly*). You do but echo
My own wild words?

Osw. Young Man, the seed must lie
Hid in the earth, or there can be no harvest;
'Tis Nature's law. What I have done in darkness
I will avow before the face of day.
Herbert *is* innocent.

Mar. What fiend could prompt
This action? Innocent!—oh, breaking heart!—
Alive or dead, I 'll find him. [*Exit.*

Osw. Alive—perdition! [*Exit.*

Scene—*The inside of a poor Cottage*

Eleanor *and* Idonea *seated*

Idon. The storm beats hard—Mercy for poor or rich,
Whose heads are shelterless in such a night!

A Voice without. Holla! to bed, good Folks, within!

Elea. O save us!

Idon. What can this mean?

Elea. Alas, for my poor husband!—
We 'll have a counting of our flocks to-morrow;
The wolf keeps festival these stormy nights:
Be calm, sweet Lady, they are wassailers
[*The voices die away in the distance.*
Returning from their Feast—my heart beats so—
A noise at midnight does *so* frighten me.

Idon. Hush! [*Listening.*

Elea. They are gone. On such a night, my husband,
Dragged from his bed, was cast into a dungeon,
Where, hid from me, he counted many years,

A criminal in no one's eyes but theirs—
Not even in theirs—whose brutal violence
So dealt with him.

IDON. I have a noble Friend
First among youths of knightly breeding, One
Who lives but to protect the weak or injured.
There again! [*Listening.*

ELEA. 'Tis my husband's foot. Good Eldred
Has a kind heart; but his imprisonment
Has made him fearful, and he 'll never be
The man he was.

IDON. I will retire;—good night!
[*She goes within.*

Enter ELDRED (*hides a bundle*)

ELD. Not yet in bed, Eleanor!—there are stains in that frock which must be washed out.

ELEA. What has befallen you?

ELD. I am belated, and you must know the cause—(*speaking low*) that is the blood of an unhappy Man.

ELEA. Oh! we are undone for ever.

ELD. Heaven forbid that I should lift my hand against any man. Eleanor, I have shed tears to-night, and it comforts me to think of it.

ELEA. Where, where is he?

ELD. I have done him no harm, but—it will be forgiven me; it would not have been so once.

ELEA. You have not *buried* anything? You are no richer than when you left me?

ELD. Be at peace; I am innocent.

ELEA. Then God be thanked——
[*A short pause; she falls upon his neck.*

ELD. To-night I met with an old Man lying stretched upon the ground—a sad spectacle: I raised him up with the hope that we might shelter and restore him.

ELEA. (*as if ready to run*). Where is he? You were not able to bring him *all* the way with you; let us return, I can help you. [ELDRED *shakes his head.*

ELD. He did not seem to wish for life: as I was struggling on, by the light of the moon I saw the stains of blood upon my clothes—he waved his hand, as if it were all useless; and I let him sink again to the ground.

ELEA. Oh that I had been by your side!

ELD. I tell you his hands and his body were cold—how could I disturb his last moments? he strove to turn from me as if he wished to settle into sleep.

ELEA. But, for the stains of blood——

ELD. He must have fallen, I fancy, for his head was cut; but I think his malady was cold and hunger.

ELEA. Oh, Eldred, I shall never be able to look up at this roof in storm or fair but I shall tremble.

ELD. Is it not enough that my ill stars have kept me abroad to-night till this hour? I come home, and this is my comfort!

ELEA. But did he say nothing which might have set you at ease?

ELD. I thought he grasped my hand while he was muttering something about his Child—his Daughter—(*starting as if he heard a noise*). What is that?

ELEA. Eldred, you are a father.

ELD. God knows what was in my heart, and will not curse my son for my sake.

ELEA. But you prayed by him? you waited the hour of his release?

ELD. The night was wasting fast; I have no friend; I am spited by the world—his wound terrified me—if I had brought him along with me, and he had died in my arms! —I am sure I heard something breathing—and this chair!

ELEA. Oh, Eldred, you will die alone. You will have nobody to close your eyes—no hand to grasp your dying hand—I shall be in my grave. A curse will attend us all.

ELD. Have you forgot your own troubles when I was in the dungeon?

ELEA. And you left him alive?

ELD. Alive!—the damps of death were upon him—he could not have survived an hour.

ELEA. In the cold, cold night.

ELD. (*in a savage tone*). Ay, and his head was bare; I suppose you would have had me lend my bonnet to cover it.—You will never rest till I am brought to a felon's end.

ELEA. Is there nothing to be done? cannot we go to the Convent?

ELD. Ay, and say at once that I murdered him!

ELEA. Eldred, I know that ours is the only house upon the Waste; let us take heart; this Man may be rich; and could he be saved by our means, his gratitude may reward us.

ELD. 'Tis all in vain.

ELEA. But let us make the attempt. This old Man may have a wife, and he may have children—let us return to the spot; we may restore him, and his eyes may yet open upon those that love him.

ELD. He will never open them more; even when he spoke to me, he kept them firmly sealed, as if he had been blind.

IDON. (*rushing out*). It is, it is, my Father—

ELD. We are betrayed! [*Looking at* IDONEA.
ELEA. His Daughter!—God have mercy!
[*Turning to* IDONEA.
IDON. (*sinking down*). Oh! lift me up and carry me to the place.
You are safe; the whole world shall not harm you.
ELEA. This Lady is his Daughter.
ELD. (*moved*). I'll lead you to the spot.
IDON. (*springing up*). Alive! you heard him breathe? quick, quick— [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE—*A Wood on the edge of the Waste*

Enter OSWALD *and a* Forester

FOR. He leaned upon the bridge that spans the glen,
And down into the bottom cast his eye,
That fastened there, as it would check the current.
OSW. He listened too; did you not say he listened?
FOR. As if there came such moaning from the flood
As is heard often after stormy nights.
OSW. But did he utter nothing?
FOR. See him there!

MARMADUKE *appearing*

MAR. Buzz, buzz, ye black and winged freebooters;
That is no substance which ye settle on!
FOR. His senses play him false; and see, his arms
Outspread, as if to save himself from falling!—
Some terrible phantom I believe is now
Passing before him, such as God will not
Permit to visit any but a man
Who has been guilty of some horrid crime.
[MARMADUKE *disappears.*
OSW. The game is up!—
FOR. If it be needful, Sir,
I will assist you to lay hands upon him.
OSW. No, no, my Friend, you may pursue your business—
'Tis a poor wretch of an unsettled mind,
Who has a trick of straying from his keepers;
We must be gentle. Leave him to my care.
[*Exit* Forester.
If his own eyes play false with him, these freaks
Of fancy shall be quickly tamed by mine;
The goal is reached. My Master shall become
A shadow of myself—made by myself.

SCENE—*The edge of the Moor*

MARMADUKE *and* ELDRED *enter from opposite sides*

MAR. (*raising his eyes and perceiving* ELDRED). In any corner
of this savage Waste,
Have you, good Peasant, seen a blind old Man?
ELD. I heard——
MAR. You heard him, where? when heard him?
ELD. As you know,
The first hours of last night were rough with storm:
I had been out in search of a stray heifer;
Returning late, I heard a moaning sound;
Then, thinking that my fancy had deceived me,
I hurried on, when straight a second moan,
A human voice distinct, struck on my ear.
So guided, distant a few steps, I found
An aged Man, and such as you describe.
MAR. You heard!—he called you to him? Of all men
The best and kindest!—but where is he? guide me,
That I may see him.
ELD. On a ridge of rocks
A lonesome Chapel stands, deserted now:
The bell is left, which no one dares remove;
And, when the stormy wind blows o'er the peak,
It rings, as if a human hand were there
To pull the cord. I guess he must have heard it;
And it had led him towards the precipice,
To climb up to the spot whence the sound came;
But he had failed through weakness. From his hand
His staff had dropped, and close upon the brink
Of a small pool of water he was laid,
As if he had stooped to drink, and so remained
Without the strength to rise.
MAR. Well, well, he lives,
And all is safe: what said he?
ELD. But few words:
He only spake to me of a dear Daughter,
Who, so he feared, would never see him more;
And of a Stranger to him, One by whom
He had been sore misused; but he forgave
The wrong and the wrong-doer. You are troubled—
Perhaps you are his son?
MAR. The All-seeing knows,
I did not think he had a living Child.—
But whither did you carry him?
ELD. He was torn,
His head was bruised, and there was blood about him——

MAR. That was no work of mine.
ELD. Nor was it mine.
MAR. But had he strength to walk? I could have borne him
A thousand miles.
ELD. I am in poverty,
And know how busy are the tongues of men;
My heart was willing, Sir, but I am one
Whose good deeds will not stand by their own light;
And, though it smote me more than words can tell,
I left him.
MAR. I believe that there are phantoms,
That in the shape of man do cross our path
On evil instigation, to make sport
Of our distress—and thou art one of them!
But things substantial have so pressed on me——
ELD. My wife and children came into my mind.
MAR. Oh Monster! Monster! there are three of us,
And we shall howl together.
[*After a pause and in a feeble voice.*
I am deserted
At my worst need, my crimes have in a net
(*Pointing to* ELDRED) Entangled this poor man.—Where
was it? where? [*Dragging him along.*
ELD. 'Tis needless; spare your violence. His Daughter——
MAR. Ay, in the word a thousand scorpions lodge:
This old man *had* a Daughter.
ELD. To the spot
I hurried back with her.—Oh save me, Sir,
From such a journey!——there was a black tree,
A single tree; she thought it was her Father.—
Oh Sir, I would not see that hour again
For twenty lives. The daylight dawned, and now—
Nay; hear my tale, 'tis fit that you should hear it—
As we approached, a solitary crow
Rose from the spot;—the Daughter clapped her hands,
And then I heard a shriek so terrible
[MARMADUKE *shrinks back.*
The startled bird quivered upon the wing.
MAR. Dead, dead!—
ELD. (*after a pause*). A dismal matter, Sir, for me,
And seems the like for you; if 'tis your wish,
I 'll lead you to his Daughter; but 'twere best
That she should be prepared; I 'll go before.
MAR. There will be need of preparation. [ELDRED *goes off.*
ELEA. (*enters*). Master!
Your limbs sink under you, shall I support you?
MAR. (*taking her arm*). Woman, I 've lent my body to the service

Which now thou tak'st upon thee. God forbid
That thou shouldst ever meet a like occasion
With such a purpose in thine heart as mine was.
ELEA. Oh, why have I to do with things like these? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the door of* ELDRED'S *cottage*—IDONEA *seated*—*enter* ELDRED

ELD. Your Father, Lady, from a wilful hand
Has met unkindness; so indeed he told me,
And you remember such was my report:
From what has just befallen me I have cause
To fear the very worst.
IDON. My Father is dead;
Why dost thou come to me with words like these?
ELD. A wicked Man should answer for his crimes
IDON. Thou seest me what I am.
ELD. It was most heinous,
And doth call out for vengeance.
IDON. Do not add,
I prithee, to the harm thou 'st done already.
ELD. Hereafter you will thank me for this service.
Hard by, a Man I met, who, from plain proofs
Of interfering Heaven, I have no doubt,
Laid hands upon your Father. Fit it were
You should prepare to meet him.
IDON. I have nothing
To do with others; help me to my Father—
[*She turns and sees* MARMADUKE *leaning on* ELEANOR—*throws herself upon his neck, and after some time,*
In joy I met thee, but a few hours past;
And thus we meet again; one human stay
Is left me still in thee. Nay, shake not so.
MAR. In such a wilderness—to see no thing,
No, not the pitying moon!
IDON. And perish so.
MAR. Without a dog to moan for him.
IDON. Think not of it,
But enter there and see him how he sleeps,
Tranquil as he had died in his own bed.
MAR. Tranquil—why not?
IDON. Oh, peace!
MAR. He is at peace;
His body is at rest: there was a plot,
A hideous plot, against the soul of man:
It took effect—and yet I baffled it,
In *some* degree.

IDON. Between us stood, I thought,
A cup of consolation, filled from Heaven
For both our needs; must I, and in thy presence,
Alone partake of it?—Belovèd Marmaduke!
MAR. Give me a reason why the wisest thing
That the earth owns shall never choose to die,
But some one must be near to count his groans.
The wounded deer retires to solitude,
And dies in solitude: all things but man,
All die in solitude. [*Moving towards the cottage door.*
Mysterious God,
If she had never lived I had not done it!—
IDON. Alas, the thought of such a cruel death
Has overwhelmed him.—I must follow.
ELD. Lady!
You will do well; (*she goes*) unjust suspicion may
Cleave to this Stranger: if, upon his entering,
The dead Man heave a groan, or from his side
Uplift his hand—that would be evidence.
ELEA. Shame! Eldred, shame!
MAR. (*both returning*). The dead have but one face.
(*To himself*). And such a Man—so meek and unoffending—
Helpless and harmless as a babe: a Man
By obvious signal to the world's protection
Solemnly dedicated—to decoy him!—
IDON. Oh, had you seen him living!—
MAR. I (so filled
With horror is this world) am unto thee
The thing most precious that it now contains:
Therefore through me alone must be revealed
By whom thy Parent was destroyed, Idonea!
I have the proofs!—
IDON. O miserable Father!
Thou didst command me to bless all mankind;
Nor to this moment have I ever wished
Evil to any living thing; but hear me,
Hear me, ye Heavens!—(*kneeling*)—may vengeance haunt the fiend
For this most cruel murder: let him live
And move in terror of the elements;
The thunder send him on his knees to prayer
In the open streets, and let him think he sees,
If e'er he entereth the house of God,
The roof, self-moved, unsettling o'er his head;
And let him, when he would lie down at night,
Point to his wife the blood-drops on his pillow!

MAR. My voice was silent, but my heart hath joined thee.
IDON. (*leaning on* MARMADUKE). Left to the mercy of that
savage Man!
How could he call upon his Child!—O Friend!
[*Turns to* MARMADUKE.
My faithful true and only Comforter.
MAR. Ay, come to me and weep. (*He kisses her.*)
(*To* ELDRED). Yes, Varlet, look,
The devils at such sights do clap their hands.
[ELDRED *retires alarmed.*
IDON. Thy vest is torn, thy cheek is deadly pale;
Hast thou pursued the monster?
MAR. I have found him.—
Oh! would that thou hadst perished in the flames!
IDON. Here art thou, then can I be desolate?—
MAR. There was a time, when this protecting hand
Availed against the mighty; never more
Shall blessings wait upon a deed of mine.
IDON. Wild words for me to hear, for me, an orphan,
Committed to thy guardianship by Heaven;
And, if thou hast forgiven me, let me hope,
In this deep sorrow, trust, that I am thine
For closer care;—here, is no malady. [*Taking his arm.*
MAR. There, *is* a malady—
(*Striking his heart and forehead.*) And here, and here,
A mortal malady.—I am accurst:
All nature curses me, and in my heart
Thy curse is fixed; the truth must be laid bare.
It must be told, and borne. I am the man,
(Abused, betrayed, but how it matters not)
Presumptuous above all that ever breathed,
Who, casting as I thought a guilty Person
Upon Heaven's righteous judgment, did become
An instrument of Fiends. Through me, through me,
Thy Father perished.
IDON. Perished—by what mischance?
MAR. Belovèd!—if I dared, so would I call thee—
Conflict must cease, and, in thy frozen heart,
The extremes of suffering meet in absolute peace.
[*He gives her a letter.*
IDON. (*reads*) 'Be not surprised if you hear that some signal judgment has befallen the man who calls himself your father; he is now with me, as his signature will shew: abstain from conjecture till you see me.
'HERBERT.
'MARMADUKE.'
The writing Oswald's; the signature my Father's:

(*Looks steadily at the paper*) And here is yours,—or do my
eyes deceive me?
You have then seen my Father?
MAR. He has leaned
Upon this arm.
IDON. You led him towards the Convent?
MAR. That Convent was Stone-Arthur Castle. Thither
We were his guides. I on that night resolved
That he should wait thy coming till the day
Of resurrection.
IDON. Miserable Woman,
Too quickly moved, too easily giving way,
I put denial on thy suit, and hence,
With the disastrous issue of last night,
Thy perturbation, and these frantic words.
Be calm, I pray thee!
MAR. Oswald——
IDON. Name him not.

Enter female Beggar.

BEG. And he is dead!—that Moor—how shall I cross it?
By night, by day, never shall I be able
To travel half a mile alone.—Good Lady!
Forgive me!—Saints forgive me. Had I thought
It would have come to this!—
IDON. What brings you hither? speak!
BEG. (*pointing to* MARMADUKE). This innocent Gentleman.
Sweet heavens! I told him
Such tales of your dead Father!—God is my judge,
I thought there was no harm: but that bad Man,
He bribed me with his gold, and looked so fierce.
Mercy! I said I know not what—oh pity me—
I said, sweet Lady, you were not his Daughter—
Pity me, I am haunted;—thrice this day
My conscience made me wish to be struck blind;
And then I would have prayed, and had no voice.
IDON. (*to* MARMADUKE). Was it my Father?—no, no, no, for he
Was meek and patient, feeble, old and blind,
Helpless, and loved me dearer than his life.
—But hear me. For *one* question, I have a heart
That will sustain me. Did you murder him?
MAR. No, not by stroke of arm. But learn the process:
Proof after proof was pressed upon me; guilt
Made evident, as seemed, by blacker guilt,
Whose impious folds enwrapped even thee; and truth
And innocence, embodied in his looks,

His words and tones and gestures, did but serve
With me to aggravate his crimes, and heaped
Ruin upon the cause for which they pleaded.
Then pity crossed the path of my resolve:
Confounded, I looked up to Heaven, and cast,
Idonea! thy blind Father on the Ordeal
Of the bleak Waste—left him—and so he died!—

[IDONEA *sinks senseless*; Beggar, ELEANOR, etc., *crowd round, and bear her off.*

Why may we speak these things, and do no more;
Why should a thrust of the arm have such a power,
And words that tell these things be heard in vain?
She is not dead. Why!—if I loved this Woman,
I would take care she never woke again;
But she WILL wake, and she will weep for me,
And say, no blame was mine—and so, poor fool,
Will waste her curses on another name.

[*He walks about distractedly.*

Enter OSWALD

OSWALD (*to himself*). Strong to o'erturn, strong also to build up. [*To* MARMADUKE.
The starts and sallies of our last encounter
Were natural enough; but that, I trust,
Is all gone by. You have cast off the chains
That fettered your nobility of mind—
Delivered heart and head!
Let us to Palestine;
This is a paltry field for enterprise.

MAR. Ay, what shall we encounter next? This issue—
'Twas nothing more than darkness deepening darkness,
And weakness crowned with the impotence of death!—
Your pupil is, you see, an apt proficient (*ironically*).
Start not!—Here is another face hard by;
Come, let us take a peep at both together,
And, with a voice at which the dead will quake,
Resound the praise of your morality—
Of this too much.

[*Drawing* OSWALD *towards the Cottage—stops short at the door.*

Men are there, millions, Oswald,
Who with bare hands would have plucked out thy heart
And flung it to the dogs: but I am raised
Above, or sunk below, all further sense
Of provocation. Leave me, with the weight
Of that old Man's forgiveness on thy heart,
Pressing as heavily as it doth on mine.

Coward I have been; know, there lies not now
Within the compass of a mortal thought,
A deed that I would shrink from;—but to endure,
That is my destiny. May it be thine:
Thy office, thy ambition, be henceforth
To feed remorse, to welcome every sting
Of penitential anguish, yea with tears.
When seas and continents shall lie between us—
The wider space the better—we may find
In such a course fit links of sympathy,
An incommunicable rivalship
Maintained, for peaceful ends beyond our view.
[*Confused voices—several of the band enter —rush upon* OSWALD *and seize him.*
ONE OF THEM. I would have dogged him to the jaws of hell—
OSW. Ha! is it so!—That vagrant Hag!—this comes
Of having left a thing like her alive! [*Aside.*
SEVERAL VOICES. Despatch him!
OSW. If I pass beneath a rock
And shout, and, with the echo of my voice,
Bring down a heap of rubbish, and it crush me,
I die without dishonour. Famished, starved,
A Fool and Coward blended to my wish!
[*Smiles scornfully and exultingly at* MARMADUKE.
WAL. 'Tis done! (*stabs him*).
ANOTHER OF THE BAND. The ruthless traitor!
MAR. A rash deed!—
With that reproof I do resign a station
Of which I have been proud.
WIL. (*approaching* MARMADUKE). O my poor Master!
MAR. Discerning Monitor, my faithful Wilfred,
Why art thou here? [*Turning to* WALLACE.
Wallace, upon these Borders,
Many there be whose eyes will not want cause
To weep that I am gone. Brothers in arms!
Raise on that dreary Waste a monument
That may record my story: nor let words—
Few must they be, and delicate in their touch
As light itself—be there withheld from Her
Who, through most wicked arts, was made an orphan
By One who would have died a thousand times,
To shield her from a moment's harm. To you,
Wallace and Wilfred, I commend the Lady,
By lowly nature reared, as if to make her
In all things worthier of that noble birth,
Whose long-suspended rights are now on the eve

Of restoration : with your tenderest care
Watch over her, I pray—sustain her——
SEVERAL OF THE BAND (*eagerly*). Captain!
MAR. No more of that; in silence hear my doom:
A hermitage has furnished fit relief
To some offenders; other penitents,
Less patient in their wretchedness, have fallen,
Like the old Roman, on their own sword's point.
They had their choice: a wanderer *must I* go,
The Spectre of that innocent Man, my guide.
No human ear shall ever hear me speak;
No human dwelling ever give me food,
Or sleep, or rest: but, over waste and wild,
In search of nothing, that this earth can give,
But expiation, will I wander on—
A Man by pain and thought compelled to live,
Yet loathing life—till anger is appeased
In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to die.

1795-6.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

I

MY heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

March 26, 1802

II

TO A BUTTERFLY

STAY near me—do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

March 14, 1802

III

THE SPARROW'S NEST

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.

1801

IV

FORESIGHT

THAT is work of waste and ruin—
Do as Charles and I are doing!
Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,
We must spare them—here are many:
Look at it—the flower is small,
Small and low, though fair as any.
Do not touch it! summers two
I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne
Pull as many as you can.
—Here are daisies, take your fill,
Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:
Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, or make your bower;

Fill your lap, and fill your bosom;
Only spare the strawberry-blossom!

Primroses, the Spring may love them—
Summer knows but little of them:
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie;
Daisies leave no fruit behind
When the pretty flowerets die;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favoured strawberry-flower.
Hither soon as spring is fled
You and Charles and I will walk;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower;
And for that promise spare the flower!

April 28, 1802

V

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild;
And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity;
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched;
Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers,
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-coloured images imprest
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

1811

VI

ADDRESS TO A CHILD

DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING

BY MY SISTER

WHAT way does the Wind come? What way does he go?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,
Through wood, and through vale; and o'er rocky height,
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight;
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There 's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
And ring a sharp 'larum;—but, if you should look,
There 's nothing to see but a cushion of snow,
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with silk.
Sometimes he 'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock;
—Yet seek him,—and what shall you find in the place?
Nothing but silence and empty space;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he 's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves!

As soon as 'tis daylight to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about;
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show!

Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle:
—But let him range round; he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we 're snug and warm;
Untouched by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read,—but that half-stifled knell,
Alas! 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock bell.

—Come now we 'll to bed ! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care ?
He may knock at the door,—we 'll not let him in ;
May drive at the windows,—we 'll laugh at his din ;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be ;
Here 's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.

1806

VII

THE MOTHER'S RETURN

BY THE SAME

A MONTH, sweet Little-ones, is past
Since your dear Mother went away,—
And she to-morrow will return ;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessèd tidings ! thought of joy !
The eldest heard with steady glee ;
Silent he stood ; then laughed amain,—
And shouted, 'Mother, come to me !'

Louder and louder did he shout,
With witless hope to bring her near ;
'Nay, patience ! patience, little boy !
Your tender mother cannot hear.'

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through ;—
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits ; what can he do ?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast ;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day ;
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly ;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back his sister's glee ;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done,—
Our rambles by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And all 'since Mother went away!'

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

—But, see, the evening star comes forth!
To bed the children must depart;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart:

'Tis gone—and in a merry fit
They run up stairs in gamesome race;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past—and, O the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

1807

VIII

ALICE FELL; OR, POVERTY

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had drowned;
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound,—and more and more;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
'Whence comes,' said I, 'this piteous moan?'
And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

'My cloak!' no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

'What ails you, child?'—she sobbed, 'Look here!'
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scare-crow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

'And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?'
'To Durham,' answered she, half wild—
'Then come with me into the chaise.'

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

'My child, in Durham do you dwell?'
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, 'My name is Alice Fell;
I'm fatherless and motherless.

'And I to Durham, Sir, belong.'
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey's end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern-door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

'And let it be of duffil grey,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!'
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell!

March 12, 13, 1802

IX

LUCY GRAY; OR, SOLITUDE

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

'To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow.'

'That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!'

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
'In heaven we all shall meet';
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

1799

X

WE ARE SEVEN

—— A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

'Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?'
'How many? Seven in all,' she said,
And wondering looked at me.

'And where are they? I pray you tell.'
She answered, 'Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

'Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.'

'You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.'

Then did the little Maid reply,
'Seven boys and girls are we;

Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.'

'You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five.'

'Their graves are green, they may be seen,'
The little Maid replied,
'Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

'My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

'And often after sun-set, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

'The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

'So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

'And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side.'

'How many are you, then,' said I,
'If they two are in heaven?'
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
'O Master! we are seven.'

'But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!'
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, 'Nay, we are seven!'

1798

XI

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS

OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE[1]

A PASTORAL

THE valley rings with mirth and joy;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never never ending song,
To welcome in the May.
The magpie chatters with delight;
The mountain raven's youngling brood
Have left the mother and the nest;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food;
Or through the glittering vapours dart
In very wantonness of heart.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two boys are sitting in the sun;
Their work, if any work they have,
Is out of mind—or done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas hymn;
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,
Their rusty hats they trim:
And thus, as happy as the day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chants a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and, more than all,
Those boys with their green coronal;
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

[1] *Ghyll*, in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is a short and, for the most part, a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. *Force* is the word universally employed in these dialects for waterfall.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
'Down to the stump of yon old yew
We 'll for our whistles run a race.'
——Away the shepherds flew;
They leapt—they ran—and when they came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
Seeing that he should lose the prize,
'Stop!' to his comrade Walter cries—
James stopped with no good will:
Said Walter then, exulting; 'Here
You 'll find a task for half a year.

'Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross—
Come on, and tread where I shall tread.'
The other took him at his word,
And followed as he led.
It was a spot which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go;
Into a chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock:
The gulf is deep below;
And, in a basin black and small,
Receives a lofty waterfall.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger pursued his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a piteous moan—
Again!—his heart within him dies—
His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
He totters, pallid as a ghost,
And, looking down, espies
A lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

The lamb had slipped into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne;
And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above
Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The lamb, still swimming round and round,
Made answer to that plaintive sound.

When he had learnt what thing it was,
That sent this rueful cry, I ween
The Boy recovered heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferred their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid—
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had thither strayed;
And there the helpless lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompassed round.

He drew it from the troubled pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The Shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the lamb they took,
Whose life and limbs the flood had spared;
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his mother's side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

1800

XII

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS

'Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges.'—Eusebius

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me—and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

'Now tell me, had you rather be,'
I said, and took him by the arm,
'On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?'

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, 'At Kilve I 'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm.'

'Now, little Edward, say why so:
My little Edward, tell me why.'—
'I cannot tell, I do not know.'—
'Why, this is strange,' said I;

'For, here are woods, hills smooth and warm:
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea.'

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply;
And three times to the child I said,
'Why, Edward, tell me why?'

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply:

'At Kilve there was no weather-cock;
And that 's the reason why.'

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

1798

XIII

RURAL ARCHITECTURE

THERE 'S George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald Shore,
Three rosy-cheeked school-boys, the highest not more
Than the height of a counsellor's bag;
To the top of Great How[1] did it please them to climb:
And there they built up, without mortar or lime,
A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gathered up as they lay:
They built him and christened him all in one day,
An urchin both vigorous and hale;
And so without scruple they called him Ralph Jones.
Now Ralph is renowned for the length of his bones;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind sallied forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the north,
Coming on with a terrible pother,
From the peak of the crag blew the giant away.
And what did these school-boys?—The very next day
They went and they built up another.

—Some little I 've seen of blind boisterous works
By Christian disturbers more savage than Turks,
Spirits busy to do and undo:
At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag;
Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the crag;
And I 'll build up a giant with you.

1800

[1] Great How is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirlmere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

XIV

THE PET-LAMB

A PASTORAL

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink;
I heard a voice; it said, 'Drink, pretty creature, drink!'
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain-lamb with a Maiden at its side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near; the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone;
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden kneel,
While to that mountain-lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears; and his tail with pleasure shook.
'Drink, pretty creature, drink,' she said in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!
I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
Now with her empty can the Maiden turned away:
But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked; and from a shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of her face:
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little Maid might sing:

'What ails thee, young One? what? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be;
Rest, little young One, rest; what is 't that aileth thee?

'What is it thou wouldst seek? What is wanting to thy heart?
Thy limbs, are they not strong? And beautiful thou art:
This grass is tender grass; these flowers they have no peers;
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears!

'If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen chain,
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain;
For rain and mountain-storms! the like thou need'st not fear,
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come here.

'Rest, little young One, rest; thou hast forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places far away;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned by none,
And thy mother from thy side for evermore was gone.

'He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home:
A blessed day for thee! then whither wouldst thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast; the dam that did thee yean
Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could have been.

'Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and new.

'Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now,
Then I 'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plough;
My playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

'It will not, will not rest!—Poor creature, can it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working so in thee?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear.

'Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and fair!
I 've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

'Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee again!'

—As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was *mine*.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song;
'Nay,' said I, 'more than half to the damsel must belong,
For she looked with such a look, and she spake with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own.'

1800

XV

TO H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
Thou faery voyager! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly!
O vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?
Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;

A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

1802

XVI

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM

[This extract is reprinted from *The Friend.*]

WISDOM and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me

It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star;
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

1799

XVII

THE LONGEST DAY

ADDRESSED TO MY DAUGHTER, DORA

LET us quit the leafy arbour,
And the torrent murmuring by;
For the sun is in his harbour,
Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
Fashioned by the glowing light;
All that breathe are thankful debtors
To the harbinger of night.

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
Eve renews her calm career;
For the day, that now is ended,
Is the longest of the year.

Dora! sport, as now thou sportest,
On this platform, light and free;
Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest,
Are indifferent to thee!

Who would check the happy feeling
That inspires the linnet's song?
Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
On her pinions swift and strong?

Yet, at this impressive season,
Words which tenderness can speak
From the truths of homely reason
Might exalt the loveliest cheek;

And, while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of 'Good night!'

Summer ebbs;—each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.

He who governs the creation,
In his providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not;—fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow, as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loth to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known.

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden!
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number;
Look thou to Eternity!

Follow thou the flowing river
On whose breast are thither borne
All deceived, and each deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn;

Through the year's successive portals;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals,
When his light returns from far.

Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And the mazy stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings;

Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth's roses are thy crown.

Grasp it,—if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest damsel of the green,
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine queen;

And ensures those palms of honour
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of heaven's unchanging year!

1817

XVIII

THE NORMAN BOY

HIGH on a broad unfertile tract of forest-skirted Down,
Nor kept by Nature for herself, nor made by man his own,
From home and company remote and every playful joy,
Served, tending a few sheep and goats, a ragged Norman Boy.

Him never saw I, nor the spot; but from an English Dame,
Stranger to me and yet my friend, a simple notice came,
With suit that I would speak in verse of that sequestered child
Whom, one bleak winter's day, she met upon the dreary Wild.

His flock, along the woodland's edge with relics sprinkled o'er
Of last night's snow, beneath a sky threatening the fall of more,
Where tufts of herbage tempted each, were busy at their feed,
And the poor Boy was busier still, with work of anxious heed.

There *was* he, where of branches rent and withered and decayed,
For covert from the keen north wind, his hands a hut had made.
A tiny tenement, forsooth, and frail, as needs must be
A thing of such materials framed, by a builder such as he.

The hut stood finished by his pains, nor seemingly lacked aught
That skill or means of his could add, but the architect had wrought
Some limber twigs into a Cross, well-shaped with fingers nice,
To be engrafted on the top of his small edifice.

That Cross he now was fastening there, as the surest power and best
For supplying all deficiencies, all wants of the rude nest
In which, from burning heat, or tempest driving far and wide,
The innocent Boy, else shelterless, his lonely head must hide.

That Cross belike he also raised as a standard for the true
And faithful service of his heart in the worst that might ensue
Of hardship and distressful fear, amid the houseless waste
Where he, in his poor self so weak, by Providence was placed.

—Here, Lady! might I cease; but nay, let *us* before we part
With this dear holy shepherd-boy breathe a prayer of earnest heart,
That unto him, where'er shall lie his life's appointed way,
The Cross, fixed in his soul, may prove an all-sufficing stay.

Published 1842.

XIX

THE POET'S DREAM

SEQUEL TO THE NORMAN BOY

JUST as those final words were penned, the sun broke out in power,
And gladdened all things; but, as chanced, within that very hour,
Air blackened, thunder growled, fire flashed from clouds that hid the sky,
And, for the Subject of my Verse, I heaved a pensive sigh.

Nor could my heart by second thoughts from heaviness be cleared,
For bodied forth before my eyes the cross-crowned hut appeared;
And, while around it storm as fierce seemed troubling earth and air,
I saw, within, the Norman Boy kneeling alone in prayer.

The Child, as if the thunder's voice spake with articulate call,
Bowed meekly in submissive fear, before the Lord of All;
His lips were moving; and his eyes, upraised to sue for grace,
With soft illumination cheered the dimness of that place.

How beautiful is holiness!—what wonder if the sight,
Almost as vivid as a dream, produced a dream at night?
It came with sleep and showed the Boy, no cherub, not transformed,
But the poor ragged Thing whose ways my human heart had warmed.

Me had the dream equipped with wings, so I took him in my arms,
And lifted from the grassy floor, stilling his faint alarms,
And bore him high through yielding air my debt of love to pay,
By giving him, for both our sakes, an hour of holiday.

I whispered, 'Yet a little while, dear Child! thou art my own,
To show thee some delightful thing, in country or in town.

What shall it be? a mirthful throng? or that holy place and calm
St. Denis, filled with royal tombs, or the Church of Notre Dame?

'St. Ouen's golden Shrine? Or choose what else would please thee most
Of any wonder Normandy, or all proud France, can boast!'
'My Mother,' said the Boy, 'was born near to a blessèd Tree,
The Chapel Oak of Allonville; good Angel, show it me!'

On wings, from broad and steadfast poise let loose by this reply,
For Allonville, o'er down and dale, away then did we fly;
O'er town and tower we flew, and fields in May's fresh verdure drest;
The wings they did not flag; the Child, though grave, was not deprest.

But who shall show, to waking sense, the gleam of light that broke
Forth from his eyes, when first the Boy looked down on that huge oak,
For length of days so much revered, so famous where it stands
For twofold hallowing—Nature's care, and work of human hands?

Strong as an Eagle with my charge I glided round and round
The wide-spread boughs, for view of door, window, and stair that wound
Gracefully up the gnarled trunk; nor left we unsurveyed
The pointed steeple peering forth from the centre of the shade.

I lighted—opened with soft touch the chapel's iron door,
Past softly, leading in the Boy; and, while from roof to floor,
From floor to roof, all round his eyes the Child with wonder cast,
Pleasure on pleasure crowded in, each livelier than the last.

For, deftly framed within the trunk, the sanctuary showed,
By light of lamp and precious stones, that glimmered here, there glowed,
Shrine, Altar, Image, Offerings hung in sign of gratitude;
Sight that inspired accordant thoughts; and speech I thus renewed:

Hither the Afflicted come, as thou hast heard thy Mother say,
And, kneeling, supplication make to our Lady de la Paix;
What mournful sighs have here been heard, and, when the voice was stopt
By sudden pangs, what bitter tears have on this pavement dropt!

'Poor Shepherd of the naked Down, a favoured lot is thine,
Far happier lot, dear Boy, than brings full many to this shrine;
From body pains and pains of soul thou needest no release,
Thy hours as they flow on are spent, if not in joy, in peace.

'Then offer up thy heart to God in thankfulness and praise,
Give to him prayers, and many thoughts, in thy most busy days;
And in His sight the fragile Cross, on thy small hut, will be
Holy as that which long hath crowned the Chapel of this Tree;

'Holy as that far seen which crowns the sumptuous Church in Rome
Where thousands meet to worship God under a mighty Dome;
He sees the bending multitude, He hears the choral rites,
Yet, not the less, in children's hymns and lonely prayer delights.

'God for His service needeth not proud work of human skill;
They please Him best who labour most to do in peace His will:
So let us strive to live, and to our Spirits will be given
Such wings as, when our Saviour calls, shall bear us up to heaven.'

The Boy no answer made by words, but, so earnest was his look,
Sleep fled, and with it fled the dream—recorded in this book,
Lest all that passed should melt away in silence from my mind,
As visions still more bright have done, and left no trace behind.

But oh! that Country-man of thine, whose eye, loved Child, can see
A pledge of endless bliss in acts of early piety,

In verse, which to thy ear might come, would treat this simple theme,
Nor leave untold our happy flight in that adventurous dream.

Alas the dream, to thee, poor Boy! to thee from whom it flowed,
Was nothing, scarcely can be aught, yet 'twas bounteously bestowed,
If I may dare to cherish hope that gentle eyes will read
Not loth, and listening Little-ones, heart-touched, their fancies feed.

Published 1842

XX

THE WESTMORELAND GIRL

TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

PART I

SEEK who will delight in fable,
I shall tell you truth. A Lamb
Leapt from this steep bank to follow
'Cross the brook its thoughtless dam.

Far and wide on hill and valley
Rain had fallen, unceasing rain,
And the bleating mother's Young-one
Struggled with the flood in vain:

But, as chanced, a Cottage-maiden
(Ten years scarcely had she told)
Seeing, plunged into the torrent,
Clasped the Lamb and kept her hold.

Whirled adown the rocky channel,
Sinking, rising, on they go,
Peace and rest, as seems, before them
Only in the lake below.

Oh! it was a frightful current
Whose fierce wrath the Girl had braved;
Clap your hands with joy, my Hearers,
Shout in triumph, both are saved;

Saved by courage that with danger
Grew, by strength the gift of love,
And belike a guardian angel
Came with succour from above.

PART II

Now, to a maturer Audience,
Let me speak of this brave Child
Left among her native mountains
With wild Nature to run wild.

So, unwatched by love maternal,
Mother's care no more her guide,
Fared this little bright-eyed Orphan
Even while at her father's side.

Spare your blame,—remembrance makes him
Loth to rule by strict command;
Still upon his cheek are living
Touches of her infant hand,

Dear caresses given in pity,
Sympathy that soothed his grief,
As the dying mother witnessed
To her thankful mind's relief.

Time passed on; the Child was happy,
Like a Spirit of air she moved,
Wayward, yet by all who knew her
For her tender heart beloved.

Scarcely less than sacred passions,
Bred in house, in grove, and field,
Link her with the inferior creatures,
Urge her powers their rights to shield.

Anglers, bent on reckless pastime,
Learn how she can feel alike
Both for tiny harmless minnow
And the fierce and sharp-toothed pike.

Merciful protectress, kindling
Into anger or disdain;
Many a captive hath she rescued,
Others saved from lingering pain.

Listen yet awhile;—with patience
Hear the homely truths I tell,
She in Grasmere's old church-steeple
Tolled this day the passing-bell.

Yes, the wild Girl of the mountains
To their echoes gave the sound,
Notice punctual as the minute,
Warning solemn and profound.

She, fulfilling her sire's office,
Rang alone the far-heard knell,
Tribute, by her hand, in sorrow,
Paid to One who loved her well

When his spirit was departed,
On that service she went forth ;
Nor will fail the like to render
When his corse is laid in earth.

What then wants the Child to temper,
In her breast, unruly fire,
To control the froward impulse
And restrain the vague desire ?

Easily a pious training
And a steadfast outward power
Would supplant the weeds and cherish,
In their stead, each opening flower.

Thus the fearless Lamb-deliv'rer,
Woman grown, meek-hearted, sage,
May become a blest example
For her sex, of every age.

Watchful as a wheeling eagle,
Constant as a soaring lark,
Should the country need a heroine,
She might prove our Maid of Arc.

Leave that thought ; and here be uttered
Prayer that Grace divine may raise
Her humane courageous spirit
Up to heaven, thro' peaceful ways.

June 6, 1845

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

I

THE BROTHERS

'THESE Tourists, heaven preserve us! needs must live
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted: some, as wise,
Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry *yonder*?—In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves.'

To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening; and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage,—as it chanced, that day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and back-and-forward steps,
Her large round wheel was turning. Towards the field
In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder: and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked; and, down the path

That from his cottage to the church-yard led,
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad; who ere his sixteenth year
Had left that calling, tempted to entrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters; with the mariners
A fellow-mariner;—and so had fared
Through twenty seasons; but he had been reared
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees:—and, when the regular wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless Main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze;
And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains; saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills—with dwellings among trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country grey
Which he himself had worn.[1]

And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth,
Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills.
—They were the last of all their race: and now,

[1] This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of *The Hurricane*.

When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him; and, not venturing to enquire
Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
He to the solitary church-yard turned;
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added.—He had found
Another grave,—near which a full half-hour
He had remained; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt; and even to hope
That he had seen this heap of turf before,—
That it was not another grave; but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known to him:
And oh what joy this recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,
And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And everlasting hills themselves were changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
Stopped short,—and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
Perused him with a gay complacency.
Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write fool upon his forehead.—Planted thus
Beneath a shed that over-arched the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appeared
The good Man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approached; he recognised the Priest at once,
And, after greetings interchanged, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life:

Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remembered? Scarce a funeral
Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen months;
And yet, some changes must take place among you:
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks,
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten
We are not all that perish.—I remember,
(For many years ago I passed this road)
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had!

PRIEST. Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same—

LEONARD. But, surely, yonder—

PRIEST. Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false.—On that tall pike
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: the huge crag
Was rent with lightning—one hath disappeared;
The other, left behind, is flowing still.
For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them;—a water-spout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract! a sharp May-storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge;
A wood is felled:—and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house-clock is decked with a new face;
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries,—one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side.—
Yours was a stranger's judgment: for historians,
Commend me to these valleys!

LEONARD. Yet your church-yard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past:
An orphan could not find his mother's grave:
Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones nor skull,—type of our earthly state
Nor emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

PRIEST. Why, there, Sir, is a thought that's new to me!
The stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
If every English church-yard were like ours;
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth:
We have no need of names and epitaphs;
We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
And then, for our immortal part! *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.

LEONARD. Your Dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?

PRIEST. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might; and, on a winter-evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave—your foot is half upon it,—
It looks just like the rest; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.

LEONARD. 'Tis a common case.
We'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.

PRIEST. That's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage—
You see it yonder! and those few green fields.
They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before

A little—yet a little,—and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind,—and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurred him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:
His pace was never that of an old man:
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him:—but you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel,—and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer—

LEONARD. But those two Orphans!

PRIEST. Orphans!—Such they were—
Yet not while Walter lived:—for, though their parents
Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them.—If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!
Ay—you may turn that way—it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

LEONARD. These boys—I hope
They loved this good old Man?—

PRIEST. They did—and truly:
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other. Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived with Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age,
With a more fond, familiar, tenderness;
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them!—From their house the school
Is distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every water-course

And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys remained
At home, go staggering through the slippery fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I have seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Ay, more than once I have seen him, mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side: and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety—

LEONARD. It may be then—

PRIEST. Never did worthier lads break English bread;
The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw,
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep those boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks, and every hollow place
That venturous foot could reach, to one or both
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow there.
Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills;
They played like two young ravens on the crags:
Then they could write, ay, and speak too, as well
As many of their betters—and for Leonard!
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I'd wager house and field
That, if he be alive, he has it yet.

LEONARD. It seems, these Brothers have not lived to be
A comfort to each other—

PRIEST. That they might
Live to such end is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wished,
And what, for my part, I have often prayed:
But Leonard—

LEONARD. Then James still is left among you!

PRIEST. 'Tis of the elder brother I am speaking:
They had an uncle;—he was at that time
A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas:
And, but for that same uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud:
For the boy loved the life which we lead here;
And though of unripe years, a stripling only,

His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
The estate and house were sold; and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years:—
Well—all was gone, and they were destitute,
And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
Twelve years are past since we had tidings from him.
If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the Great Gavel,[1] down by Leeza's banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a joyous festival;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see—
Hanging in the open air—but, O good Sir!
This is sad talk—they 'll never sound for him—
Living or dead.—When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary coast.—'Twas not a little
That would bring down his spirit; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Youth
Was sadly crossed.—Poor Leonard! when we parted
He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return,
To live in peace upon his father's land,
And lay his bones among us.

LEONARD. If that day
Should come, 'twould needs be a glad day for him;
He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him—

PRIEST. Happy! Sir—

LEONARD. You said his kindred all were in their graves,
And that he had one Brother—

PRIEST. That is but
A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy

[1] The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the Lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

In him was somewhat checked; and, when his Brother
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little colour that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek; he drooped, and pined, and pined—
LEONARD. But these are all the graves of full-grown men!
PRIEST. Ay, Sir, that passed away: we took him to us;
He was the child of all the dale—he lived
Three months with one, and six months with another;
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love:
And many, many, happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
His absent Brother still was at his heart.
And, when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found
(A practice till this time unknown to him)
That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
He sought his brother Leonard.—You are moved!
Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
I judged you most unkindly.
LEONARD. But this Youth,
How did he die at last?
PRIEST. One sweet May-morning,
(It will be twelve years since when Spring returns)
He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
With two or three companions, whom their course
Of occupation led from height to height
Under a cloudless sun—till he, at length,
Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
The humour of the moment, lagged behind.
You see yon precipice;—it wears the shape
Of a vast building made of many crags;
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called THE PILLAR.
Upon its aëry summit crowned with heath,
The loiterer, not unnoticed by his comrades,
Lay stretched at ease; but, passing by the place
On their return, they found that he was gone.
No ill was feared; till one of them by chance
Entering, when evening was far spent, the house
Which at that time was James's home, there learned
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still he was unheard of:
The neighbours were alarmed, and to the brook
Some hastened; some ran to the lake: ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same rock

Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies!
LEONARD. And that then *is* his grave!—Before his death
You say that he saw many happy years?
PRIEST. Ay, that he did—
LEONARD. And all went well with him?—
PRIEST. If he had one, the Youth had twenty homes.
LEONARD. And you believe, then, that his mind was easy?—
PRIEST. Yes, long before he died, he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless fortune,
He talked about him with a cheerful love.
LEONARD. He could not come to an unhallowed end!
PRIEST. Nay, God forbid!—You recollect I mentioned
A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
On the soft heath,—and, waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep; that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit had fallen headlong.
And so no doubt he perished. When the Youth
Fell, in his hand he must have grasp'd, we think,
His shepherd's staff; for on that Pillar of rock
It had been caught mid-way; and there for years
It hung;—and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended—
The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart, that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence;
And Leonard, when they reached the church-yard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round,—
And, looking at the grave, he said, 'My Brother!'
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now
He pointed towards his dwelling-place, entreating
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thanked him with an earnest voice;
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopped short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him:—his long absence, cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,

All pressed on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquished all his purposes.
He travelled back to Egremont: and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had passed between them;
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.
This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey-headed Mariner.

1800

II

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE

(SEE THE CHRONICLE OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, AND MILTON'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND)

WHERE be the temples which, in Britain's Isle,
For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised?
Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed!
Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore,
They sank, delivered o'er
To fatal dissolution; and, I ween,
No vestige then was left that such had ever been.

Nathless, a British record (long concealed
In old Armorica, whose secret springs
No Gothic conqueror ever drank) revealed
The marvellous current of forgotten things;
How Brutus came, by oracles impelled,
And Albion's giants quelled,
A brood whom no civility could melt,
'Who never tasted grace, and goodness ne'er had felt.'

By brave Corineus aided, he subdued,
And rooted out the intolerable kind;
And this too-long-polluted land imbued
With goodly arts and usages refined;
Whence golden harvests, cities, warlike towers,
And pleasure's sumptuous bowers;
Whence all the fixed delights of house and home,
Friendships that will not break, and love that cannot roam.

O, happy Britain! region all too fair
For self-delighting fancy to endure
That silence only should inhabit there,
Wild beasts, or uncouth savages impure!
But, intermingled with the generous seed,
Grew many a poisonous weed;
Thus fares it still with all that takes its birth
From human care, or grows upon the breast of earth.

Hence, and how soon! that war of vengeance waged
By Guendolen against her faithless lord;
Till she, in jealous fury unassuaged,
Had slain his paramour with ruthless sword:
Then, into Severn hideously defiled,
She flung her blameless child,
Sabrina,—vowing that the stream should bear
That name through every age, her hatred to declare.

So speaks the Chronicle, and tells of Lear
By his ungrateful daughters turned adrift.
Ye lightnings, hear his voice!—they cannot hear,
Nor can the winds restore his simple gift.
But One there is, a Child of nature meek,
Who comes her Sire to seek;
And he, recovering sense, upon her breast
Leans smilingly, and sinks into a perfect rest.

There too we read of Spenser's fairy themes,
And those that Milton loved in youthful years;
The sage enchanter Merlin's subtle schemes;
The feats of Arthur and his knightly peers;
Of Arthur,—who, to upper light restored,
With that terrific sword
Which yet he brandishes for future war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star!

What wonder, then, if in such ample field
Of old tradition, one particular flower
Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
And bloom unnoticed even to this late hour?
Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant,
While I this flower transplant
Into a garden stored with Poesy;
Where flowers and herbs unite, and haply some weeds be,
That, wanting not wild grace, are from all mischief free!

A King more worthy of respect and love
Than wise Gorbonian ruled not in his day;
And grateful Britain prospered far above
All neighbouring countries through his righteous sway;
He poured rewards and honours on the good;
The oppressor he withstood;
And while he served the Gods with reverence due,
Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns and cities grew.

He died, whom Artegal succeeds—his son;
But how unworthy of that sire was he!
A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.
From crime to crime he mounted, till at length
The nobles leagued their strength
With a vexed people, and the tyrant chased;
And on the vacant throne his worthier Brother placed.

From realm to realm the humbled Exile went,
Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain;
In many a court, and many a warrior's tent,
He urged his persevering suit in vain.
Him, in whose wretched heart ambition failed,
Dire poverty assailed;
And, tired with slights his pride no more could brook,
He towards his native country cast a longing look.

Fair blew the wished-for wind—the voyage sped;
He landed; and, by many dangers scared,
'Poorly provided, poorly followèd,'
To Calaterium's forest he repaired.
How changed from him who, born to highest place,
Had swayed the royal mace,
Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
In Troynovant, his seat by silver Thames's side!

From that wild region where the crownless king
Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
Supporting life by water from the spring,
And such chance food as outlaws can obtain,
Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
A messenger he sends;
And from their secret loyalty requires
Shelter and daily bread,—the sum of his desires.

While he the issue waits, at early morn
Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced to hear
A startling outcry made by hound and horn,
From which the tusky wild boar flies in fear;
And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy plain,
Behold the hunter train!
He bids his little company advance
With seeming unconcern and steady countenance.

The royal Elidure, who leads the chase,
Hath checked his foaming courser:—can it be!
Methinks that I should recognise that face,
Though much disguised by long adversity!
He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
Confounded and amazed—
'It is the king, my brother!' and, by sound
Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon the ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace he gave,
Feebly returned by daunted Artegal;
Whose natural affection doubts enslave,
And apprehensions dark and criminal.
Loth to restrain the moving interview,
The attendant lords withdrew;
And, while they stood upon the plain apart,
Thus Elidure, by words, relieved his struggling heart.

'By heavenly Powers conducted, we have met;
—O Brother! to my knowledge lost so long,
But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
Nor to my wishes lost;—forgive the wrong,
(Such it may seem) if I thy crown have borne,
Thy royal mantle worn:
I was their natural guardian; and 'tis just
That now I should restore what hath been held in trust.'

A while the astonished Artegal stood mute,
Then thus exclaimed: 'To me, of titles shorn,
And stripped of power! me, feeble, destitute,
To me a kingdom! spare the bitter scorn:
If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,
Then, on the wide-spread wings
Of war, had I returned to claim my right;
This will I here avow, not dreading thy despite.'

'I do not blame thee,' Elidure replied;
'But, if my looks did with my words agree,
I should at once be trusted, not defied,
And thou from all disquietude be free.
May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,
Who to this blessed place
At this blest moment led me, if I speak
With insincere intent, on me her vengeance wreak!

'Were this same spear, which in my hand I grasp,
The British sceptre, here would I to thee
The symbol yield; and would undo this clasp,
If it confined the robe of sovereignty.
Odious to me the pomp of regal court,
And joyless sylvan sport,
While thou art roving, wretched and forlorn,
Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the forest thorn!'

Then Artegal thus spake: 'I only sought
Within this realm a place of safe retreat;
Beware of rousing an ambitious thought;
Beware of kindling hopes for me unmeet!
Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind
Art pitiably blind:
Full soon this generous purpose thou may'st rue,
When that which has been done no wishes can undo.

'Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
Would balance claim with claim, and right with right?
But thou—I know not how inspired, how led—
Wouldst change the course of things in all men's sight!
And this for one who cannot imitate
Thy virtue, who may hate:
For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,
He reign, thou still must be his king, and sovereign lord;

'Lifted in magnanimity above
Aught that my feeble nature could perform,
Or even conceive; surpassing me in love
Far as in power the eagle doth the worm:
I, Brother! only should be king in name,
And govern to my shame;
A shadow in a hated land, while all
Of glad or willing service to thy share would fall.'

'Believe it not,' said Elidure; 'respect
Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
Attends on goodness with dominion decked,
Which stands the universal empire's boast;
This can thy own experience testify:
Nor shall thy foes deny
That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
Our father's spirit seemed in thee to breathe again.

'And what if o'er that bright unbosoming
Clouds of disgrace and envious fortune past!
Have we not seen the glories of the spring
By veil of noontide darkness overcast?
The frith that glittered like a warrior's shield,
The sky, the gay green field,
Are vanished; gladness ceases in the groves,
And trepidation strikes the blackened mountain-coves.

'But is that gloom dissolved? how passing clear
Seems the wide world, far brighter than before!
Even so thy latent worth will re-appear,
Gladdening the people's heart from shore to shore;
For youthful faults ripe virtues shall atone;
Re-seated on thy throne,
Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune, pain,
And sorrow, have confirmed thy native right to reign.

'But, not to overlook what thou may'st know,
Thy enemies are neither weak nor few;
And circumspect must be our course, and slow,
Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.
Dismiss thy followers;—let them calmly wait
Such change in thy estate
As I already have in thought devised;
And which, with caution due, may soon be realized.'

The Story tells what courses were pursued,
Until king Elidure, with full consent
Of all his peers, before the multitude,
Rose,—and, to consummate this just intent,
Did place upon his brother's head the crown,
Relinquished by his own;
Then to his people cried, 'Receive your lord,
Gorbonian's first-born son, your rightful king restored!'

The people answered with a loud acclaim:
Yet more;—heart-smitten by the heroic deed,
The reinstated Artegal became
Earth's noblest penitent; from bondage freed
Of vice—thenceforth unable to subvert
Or shake his high desert.
Long did he reign; and, when he died, the tear
Of universal grief bedewed his honoured bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved;
With whom a crown (temptation that hath set
Discord in hearts of men till they have braved
Their nearest kin with deadly purpose met)
'Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love, did seem
A thing of no esteem;
And, from this triumph of affection pure,
He bore the lasting name of 'pious Elidure!'

1815

III

TO A BUTTERFLY

I'VE watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!—not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

April 20, 1802

IV

A FAREWELL

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell!—we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone;
The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
Will prosper, though untended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none:
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon;
Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!
For two months now in vain we shall be sought;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, Building without peer!
—A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you; to you herself will wed;
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,

Making all kindness registered and known;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
To them who look not daily on thy face;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And say'st, when we forsake thee, 'Let them go!'
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best;
Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with Her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

1802

V

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S CASTLE OF INDOLENCE

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took:
Here on his hours he hung as on a book,
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow, or belike to-day,
Seek for him,—he is fled; and whither none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighbouring height:
Oft could we see him driving full in view
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this Man
When he came back to us, a withered flower,—
Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit; and without strength or power
Look at the common grass from hour to hour:
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong;
But verse was what he had been wedded to;
And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight along.

With him there often walked in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable Man with large grey eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe;
Yet some did think that he had little business here:

Sweet heaven forefend! his was a lawful right;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with delight,
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy

Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself; and many did to him repair,—
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
Made, to his ear attentively applied,
A pipe on which the wind would deftly play;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
A mailèd angel on a battle-day;
The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery:
And, sooth, these two were each to the other dear:
No livelier love in such a place could be:
There did they dwell—from earthly labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden-queen.

May 9-11, 1802

VI

LOUISA

AFTER ACCOMPANYING HER ON A MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

I MET Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely Maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May?

And she hath smiles to earth unknown;
Smiles, that with motion of their own
Do spread, and sink, and rise;
That come and go with endless play,
And ever, as they pass away,
Are hidden in her eyes.

She loves her fire, her cottage-home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that's mine 'beneath the moon,'
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

Probably 1801

VII

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!
'O mercy!' to myself I cried,
'If Lucy should be dead!'

1799

VIII

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

1799

IX

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

1799?

X

ERE with cold beads of midnight dew
Had mingled tears of thine,
I grieved, fond Youth! that thou shouldst sue
To haughty Geraldine.

Immovable by generous sighs,
She glories in a train
Who drag, beneath our native skies,
An Oriental chain.

Pine not like them with arms across,
Forgetting in thy care
How the fast-rooted trees can toss
Their branches in mid air.

The humblest rivulet will take
Its own wild liberties;
And, every day, the imprisoned lake
Is flowing in the breeze.

Then crouch no more on suppliant knee,
But scorn with scorn outbrave;
A Briton, even in love, should be
A subject, not a slave!

1826

XI

TO ——

LOOK at the fate of summer flowers,
Which blow at daybreak, droop ere even-song;
And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
Measured by what we are and ought to be,
Measured by all that, trembling, we foresee,
Is not so long!

If human Life do pass away,
Perishing yet more swiftly than the flower,
If we are creatures of a *winter's* day,
What space hath Virgin's beauty to disclose
Her sweets, and triumph o'er the breathing rose?
Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid:
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid!
Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
So soon be lost.

Then shall love teach some virtuous Youth
'To draw, out of the object of his eyes,'
The while on thee they gaze in simple truth,
Hues more exalted, 'a refinèd Form,'
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
And never dies.

1824

XII

THE FORSAKEN

THE peace which others seek they find;
The heaviest storms not longest last;
Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind
An amnesty for what is past;
When will my sentence be reversed?
I only pray to know the worst;
And wish, as if my heart would burst.

O weary struggle! silent years
Tell seemingly no doubtful tale;
And yet they leave it short, and fears
And hopes are strong and will prevail.
My calmest faith escapes not pain;
And, feeling that the hope is vain,
I think that he will come again.

Published 1842

XIII

'TIS said, that some have died for love:
And here and there a churchyard grave is found
In the cold north's unhallowed ground,
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side:
He loved—the pretty Barbara died;
And thus he makes his moan:
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
When thus his moan he made:

'Oh, move, thou Cottage, from behind that oak!
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky!
The clouds pass on; they from the heavens depart:
I look—the sky is empty space;
I know not what I trace;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

'O! what a weight is in these shades! Ye leaves,
That murmur once so dear, when will it cease?
Your sound my heart of rest bereaves,
It robs my heart of peace.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud—and loud and free,
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit;
Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

'Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy mountain-bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chained!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustained;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb!
Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now.

'Thou Eglantine, so bright with sunny showers,
Proud as a rainbow spanning half the vale,
Thou one fair shrub, oh! shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale.
For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,—
Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear.'

The Man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah, gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle Love! nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor know
Such happiness as I have known to-day.

1800

XIV

A COMPLAINT

THERE is a change—and I am poor;
Your love hath been, nor long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did; not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

1806

XV

TO ——

LET other bards of angels sing,
Bright suns without a spot;
But thou art no such perfect thing:
Rejoice that thou art not!

Heed not tho' none should call thee fair;
So, Mary, let it be
If nought in loveliness compare
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,
Whose veil is unremoved
Till heart with heart in concord beats,
And the lover is beloved.

1824

XVI

YES! thou art fair, yet be not moved
To scorn the declaration,
That sometimes I in thee have loved
My fancy's own creation.

Imagination needs must stir;
Dear Maid, this truth believe,
Minds that have nothing to confer
Find little to perceive.

Be pleased that nature made thee fit
To feed my heart's devotion,
By laws to which all Forms submit
In sky, air, earth, and ocean.

Published 1845

XVII

HOW rich that forehead's calm expanse!
How bright that heaven-directed glance!
—Waft her to glory, wingèd Powers,
Ere sorrow be renewed,
And intercourse with mortal hours
Bring back a humbler mood!
So looked Cecilia when she drew
An Angel from his station;
So looked; not ceasing to pursue
Her tuneful adoration!

But hand and voice alike are still;
No sound *here* sweeps away the will
That gave it birth: in service meek
One upright arm sustains the cheek,
And one across the bosom lies—
That rose, and now forgets to rise,
Subdued by breathless harmonies
Of meditative feeling;
Mute strains from worlds beyond the skies,
Through the pure light of female eyes
Their sanctity revealing!

1824

XVIII

WHAT heavenly smiles! O Lady mine,
Through my very heart they shine;
And, if my brow gives back their light,
Do thou look gladly on the sight;

As the clear Moon with modest pride
  Beholds her own bright beams
Reflected from the mountain's side
  And from the headlong streams.

Published 1845

XIX

TO ——

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
  Full oft our human foresight I deplore;
Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear
That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no more!

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest;
While all the future, for thy purer soul,
With 'sober certainties' of love is blest.

That sigh of thine, not meant for human ear,
Tells that these words thy humbleness offend;
Yet bear me up—else faltering in the rear
Of a steep march: support me to the end.

Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
And Love is dutiful in thought and deed;
Through Thee communion with that Love I seek:
The faith Heaven strengthens where *he* moulds the Creed.

1824

XX

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

ON THE EVE OF A NEW YEAR

I

SMILE of the Moon!—for so I name
  That silent greeting from above;
A gentle flash of light that came
From her whom drooping captives love;
Or art thou of still higher birth?
Thou that didst part the clouds of earth,
My torpor to reprove!

II

Bright boon of pitying Heaven!—alas,
I may not trust thy placid cheer!
Pondering that Time to-night will pass
The threshold of another year;
For years to me are sad and dull;
My very moments are too full
Of hopelessness and fear.

III

And yet the soul-awakening gleam,
That struck perchance the farthest cone
Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem
To visit me, and me alone;
Me, unapproached by any friend,
Save those who to my sorrows lend
Tears due unto their own.

IV

To-night the church-tower bells will ring
Through these wide realms a festive peal;
To the new year a welcoming;
A tuneful offering for the weal
Of happy millions lulled in sleep;
While I am forced to watch and weep,
By wounds that may not heal.

V

Born all too high, by wedlock raised
Still higher—to be cast thus low!
Would that mine eyes had never gazed
On aught of more ambitious show
Than the sweet flowerets of the fields!
—It is my royal state that yields
This bitterness of woe.

VI

Yet how?—for I, if there be truth
In the world's voice, was passing fair;
And beauty, for confiding youth,
Those shocks of passion can prepare
That kill the bloom before its time;
And blanch, without the owner's crime,
The most resplendent hair.

VII

Unblest distinction! showered on me
To bind a lingering life in chains:
All that could quit my grasp, or flee,
Is gone;—but not the subtle stains
Fixed in the spirit; for even here
Can I be proud that jealous fear
Of what I was remains.

VIII

A Woman rules my prison's key;
A sister Queen, against the bent
Of law and holiest sympathy,
Detains me, doubtful of the event;
Great God, who feel'st for my distress,
My thoughts are all that I possess,
O keep them innocent!

IX

Farewell desire of human aid,
Which abject mortals vainly court!
By friends deceived, by foes betrayed,
Of fears the prey, of hopes the sport;
Nought but the world-redeeming Cross
Is able to supply my loss,
My burthen to support.

X

Hark! the death-note of the year
Sounded by the castle-clock!
From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
Stole forth, unsettled by the shock;
But oft the woods renewed their green,
Ere the tired head of Scotland's Queen
Reposed upon the block!

1817

XXI

THE COMPLAINT

OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN

[When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deerskins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will

afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he be unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert, unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, Hearne's *Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean.* In the high northern latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the northern lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise, as alluded to in the following poem.]

I

BEFORE I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars, they were among my dreams;
In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive;
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!

II

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain:
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone, I cannot fear to die.

III

Alas! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger
And oh, how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
Dear friends, when ye were gone away.

IV

My Child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my Babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange working did I see;
—As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me:
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a helpless child.

V

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send;
Too soon, my friends, ye went away;
For I had many things to say.

VI

I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain
I'll look upon your tents again.
—My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood:
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I;
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

VII

Young as I am, my course is run,
I shall not see another sun;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child, if I
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be;
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day.

1798

XXII

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK

I

IN distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet:
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms a Lamb he had.

II

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide;
And with his coat did then essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him, and said, 'My friend,
What ails you? wherefore weep you so?
—'Shame on me, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock;
He is the last of all my flock.

III

'When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

IV

'Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the Quantock hills they fed;

They throve, and we at home did thrive :
—This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive ;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

V

'Six Children, Sir ! had I to feed ;
Hard labour in a time of need !
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said, I was a wealthy man :
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
"Do this : how can we give to you,"
They cried, "what to the poor is due ?"

VI

'I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food ;
For me—it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away—
For me it was a woeful day.

VII

'Another still ! and still another .
A little lamb, and then its mother !
It was a vein that never stopped—
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
Till thirty were not left alive
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one ;
And I may say, that many a time
I wished they all were gone—
Reckless of what might come at last
Were but the bitter struggle past.

VIII

'To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind ;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me :
No peace, no comfort could I find,

No ease, within doors or without;
And crazily and wearily
I went my work about;
And oft was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

IX

'Sir! 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

X

'They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe;—
And then at last from three to two;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one:
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas! and I have none:—
To-day I fetched it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock.'

1798

XXIII

REPENTANCE

A PASTORAL BALLAD

THE fields which with covetous spirit we sold,
Those beautiful fields, the delight of the day,
Would have brought us more good than a burthen of gold,
Could we but have been as contented as they.

When the troublesome Tempter beset us, said I,
'Let him come, with his purse proudly grasped in his hand;
But, Allan, be true to me, Allan,—we 'll die
Before he shall go with an inch of the land!'

There dwelt we, as happy as birds in their bowers;
Unfettered as bees that in gardens abide;
We could do what we liked with the land, it was ours;
And for us the brook murmured that ran by its side.

But now we are strangers, go early or late;
And often, like one overburthened with sin,
With my hand on the latch of the half-opened gate,
I look at the fields, but I cannot go in!

When I walk by the hedge on a bright summer's day,
Or sit in the shade of my grandfather's tree,
A stern face it puts on, as if ready to say,
'What ails you, that you must come creeping to me!'

With our pastures about us, we could not be sad;
Our comfort was near if we ever were crost;
But the comfort, the blessings, and wealth that we had,
We slighted them all,—and our birthright was lost.

Oh, ill-judging sire of an innocent son
Who must now be a wanderer! but peace to that strain!
Think of evening's repose when our labour was done,
The Sabbath's return; and its leisure's soft chain!

And in sickness, if night had been sparing of sleep,
How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I stood,
Looking down on the kine, and our treasure of sheep
That besprinkled the field; 'twas like youth in my blood!

Now I cleave to the house, and am dull as a snail;
And, oftentimes, hear the church-bell with a sigh,
That follows the thought—We've no land in the vale,
Save six feet of earth where our forefathers lie!

1804

XXIV

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET ——

I

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

II

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

III

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

IV

Ah! little doth the young-one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

V

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, 'Pride shall help me in my wrong:
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed': and that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

IX

I look for ghosts; but none will force
Their way to me: 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

X

My apprehensions come in crowds,
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass:
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind.

XI

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend!

Published 1807

XXV

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT

BY MY SISTER

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
The north-wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast;
All merry things are now at rest,
Save thee, my pretty Love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;
There's nothing stirring in the house
Save one *wee*, hungry, nibbling mouse,
Then why so busy thou?

Nay! start not at that sparkling light;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
On the window pane bedropped with rain:
Then, little Darling! sleep again,
And wake when it is day.

1805

XXVI

MATERNAL GRIEF

DEPARTED Child! I could forget thee once
Though at my bosom nursed; this woeful gain
Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
Is present and perpetually abides
A shadow, never, never to be displaced
By the returning substance, seen or touched,
Seen by mine eyes, or clasped in my embrace.
Absence and death how differ they! and how
Shall I admit that nothing can restore
What one short sigh so easily removed?—
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,
Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,
O teach me calm submission to thy Will!

The Child she mourned had overstepped the pale
Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air
That sanctifies its confines, and partook
Reflected beams of that celestial light
To all the Little-ones on sinful earth
Not unvouchsafed—a light that warmed and cheered
Those several qualities of heart and mind

Which, in her own blest nature, rooted deep,
Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,
And not hers only, their peculiar charms
Unfolded,—beauty, for its present self,
And for its promises to future years,
With not unfrequent rapture fondly hailed.

Have you espied upon a dewy lawn
A pair of Leverets each provoking each
To a continuance of their fearless sport,
Two separate Creatures in their several gifts
Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all
That Nature prompts them to display, their looks,
Their starts of motion and their fits of rest,
An undistinguishable style appears
And character of gladness, as if Spring
Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the spirit
Of the rejoicing morning were their own?

Such union, in the lovely Girl maintained
And her twin Brother, had the parent seen,
Ere, pouncing like a ravenous bird of prey,
Death in a moment parted them, and left
The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse
Than desolate; for oft-times from the sound
Of the survivor's sweetest voice (dear child,
He knew it not) and from his happiest looks,
Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
By Heaven afforded to uphold her maimed
And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
Now first acquainted with distress and grief,
Shrunk from his Mother's presence, shunned with fear
Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
In his known haunts of joy where'er he might,
A more congenial object. But, as time
Softened her pangs and reconciled the child
To what he saw, he gradually returned,
Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
A broken intercourse; and, while his eyes
Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
Turned upon her who bore him, she would stoop
To imprint a kiss that lacked not power to spread
Faint colour over both their pallid cheeks,
And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they were calmed
And cheered: and now together breathe fresh air
In open fields; and when the glare of day

Is gone, and twilight to the Mother's wish
Befriends the observance, readily they join
In walks whose boundary is the lost One's grave,
Which he with flowers hath planted, finding there
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss
Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
In prayer, yet blending with that solemn rite
Of pious faith the vanities of grief;
For such, by pitying Angels and by Spirits
Transferred to regions upon which the clouds
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed
Those willing tears, and unforbidden sighs,
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow,
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of Heaven
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart
Immortal as the love that gave it being.

Published 1842

XXVII

THE SAILOR'S MOTHER

ONE morning (raw it was and wet—
A foggy day in winter time)
A Woman on the road I met,
Not old, though something past her prime:
Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.

The ancient spirit is not dead;
Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
Proud was I that my country bred
Such strength, a dignity so fair:
She begged an alms, like one in poor estate;
I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
'What is it,' said I, 'that you bear,
Beneath the covert of your Cloak,
Protected from this cold damp air?'
She answered, soon as she the question heard,
'A simple burthen, Sir, a little Singing-bird.'

And, thus continuing, she said,
'I had a Son, who many a day
Sailed on the seas, but he is dead;
In Denmark he was cast away:
And I have travelled weary miles to see
If aught which he had owned might still remain for me.

'The bird and cage they both were his:
'Twas my Son's bird; and neat and trim
He kept it; many voyages
The singing-bird had gone with him;
When last he sailed, he left the bird behind;
From bodings, as might be, that hung upon his mind.

'He to a fellow-lodger's care
Had left it, to be watched and fed,
And pipe its song in safety;—there
I found it when my Son was dead;
And now, God help me for my little wit!
I bear it with me, Sir;—he took so much delight in it.'

March 11, 12, 1802

XXVIII

THE CHILDLESS FATHER

'UP, Timothy, up with your staff and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds.'

—Of coats and of jackets grey, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

Fresh sprigs of green box-wood, not six months before,
Filled the funeral basin[1] at Timothy's door;
A coffin through Timothy's threshold had past;
One Child did it bear, and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse, and the horn, and the hark! hark away!
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said;
'The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead.'
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak;
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

1800

[1] In several parts of the North of England, when a funeral takes place, a basin full of Sprigs of Box-wood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a Sprig of this Box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

XXIX

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER

ONCE in a lonely hamlet I sojourned
In which a Lady driven from France did dwell;
The big and lesser griefs with which she mourned
In friendship she to me would often tell.

This Lady, dwelling upon British ground,
Where she was childless, daily would repair
To a poor neighbouring cottage; as I found,
For sake of a young Child whose home was there.

Once having seen her clasp with fond embrace
This Child, I chanted to myself a lay,
Endeavouring, in our English tongue, to trace
Such things as she unto the Babe might say:
And thus, from what I heard and knew, or guessed,
My song the workings of her heart expressed.

I

'Dear Babe thou daughter of another,
One moment let me be thy mother!
An infant's face and looks are thine
And sure a mother's heart is mine:
Thy own dear mother's far away,
At labour in the harvest field:
Thy little sister is at play;—
What warmth, what comfort would it yield
To my poor heart, if thou wouldst be
One little hour a child to me!

II

'Across the waters I am come,
And I have left a babe at home:
A long, long way of land and sea!
Come to me—I 'm no enemy:
I am the same who at thy side
Sate yesterday, and made a nest
For thee, sweet Baby!—thou hast tried,
Thou know'st the pillow of my breast;
Good, good art thou:—alas! to me
Far more than I can be to thee.

III

'Here, little Darling, dost thou lie;
An infant thou, a mother I!
Mine wilt thou be, thou hast no fears;
Mine art thou—spite of these my tears.
Alas! before I left the spot,
My baby and its dwelling-place,
The nurse said to me, "Tears should not
Be shed upon an infant's face,
It was unlucky"—no, no, no;
No truth is in them who say so!

IV

'My own dear Little-one will sigh,
Sweet Babe! and they will let him die.
"He pines," they 'll say, "it is his doom,
And you may see his hour is come."
Oh! had he but thy cheerful smiles,
Limbs stout as thine, and lips as gay,
Thy looks, thy cunning, and thy wiles,
And countenance like a summer's day,
They would have hopes of him;—and then
I should behold his face again!

V

"'Tis gone—like dreams that we forget;
There was a smile or two—yet—yet
I can remember them, I see
The smiles, worth all the world to me.
Dear Baby! I must lay thee down;
Thou troublest me with strange alarms;
Smiles hast thou, bright ones of thy own;
I cannot keep thee in my arms;
For they confound me;—where—where is
That last, that sweetest smile of his?

VI

'Oh! how I love thee!—we will stay
Together here this one half day.
My sister's child, who bears my name,
From France to sheltering England came;
She with her mother crossed the sea;
The babe and mother near me dwell:
Yet does my yearning heart to thee
Turn rather, though I love her well:
Rest, little Stranger, rest thee here!
Never was any child more dear!

VII

'—I cannot help it; ill intent
I've none, my pretty Innocent!
I weep—I know they do thee wrong,
These tears—and my poor idle tongue.
Oh, what a kiss was that! my cheek
How cold it is! but thou art good;
Thine eyes are on me—they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that soft, warm face,
My heart again is in its place!

VII

'While thou art mine, my little Love,
This cannot be a sorrowful grove;
Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee:
Here's grass to play with, here are flowers;
I'll call thee by my darling's name;
Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
Thy features seem to me the same;
His little sister thou shalt be;
And, when once more my home I see,
I'll tell him many tales of Thee.'

March 16, 17, 1802

XXX

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA

[The following tale was written as an Episode, in a work from which its length may perhaps exclude it. The facts are true; no invention as to these has been exercised, as none was needed.]

O HAPPY time of youthful lovers (thus
My story may begin) O balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven!
To such inheritance of blessed fancy
(Fancy that sports more desperately with minds
Than ever fortune hath been known to do)
The high-born Vaudracour was brought, by years
Whose progress had a little overstepped
His stripling prime. A town of small repute,
Among the vine-clad mountains of Auvergne,
Was the Youth's birth-place. There he wooed a Maid
Who heard the heart-felt music of his suit

With answering vows. Plebeian was the stock,
Plebeian, though ingenuous, the stock,
From which her graces and her honours sprung:
And hence the father of the enamoured Youth,
With haughty indignation, spurned the thought
Of such alliance.—From their cradles up,
With but a step between their several homes,
Twins had they been in pleasure; after strife
And petty quarrels, had grown fond again;
Each other's advocate, each other's stay;
And, in their happiest moments, not content,
If more divided than a sportive pair
Of sea-fowl, conscious both that they are hovering
Within the eddy of a common blast,
Or hidden only by the concave depth
Of neighbouring billows from each other's sight.

Thus, not without concurrence of an age
Unknown to memory, was an earnest given
By ready nature for a life of love,
For endless constancy, and placid truth;
But whatsoe'er of such rare treasure lay
Reserved, had fate permitted, for support
Of their maturer years, his present mind
Was under fascination;—he beheld
A vision, and adored the thing he saw.
Arabian fiction never filled the world
With half the wonders that were wrought for him.
Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring;
Life turned the meanest of her implements,
Before his eyes, to price above all gold;
The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine;
Her chamber-window did surpass in glory
The portals of the dawn; all Paradise
Could, by the simple opening of a door,
Let itself in upon him:—pathways, walks,
Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank,
Surcharged, within him, overblest to move
Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world
To its dull round of ordinary cares;
A man too happy for mortality!

So passed the time, till, whether through effect
Of some unguarded moment that dissolved
Virtuous restraint—ah, speak it, think it, not!
Deem rather that the fervent Youth, who saw
So many bars between his present state

And the dear haven where he wished to be
In honourable wedlock with his Love,
Was in his judgment tempted to decline
To perilous weakness, and entrust his cause
To nature for a happy end of all;
Deem that by such fond hope the Youth was swayed,
And bear with their transgression, when I add
That Julia, wanting yet the name of wife,
Carried about her for a secret grief
The promise of a mother.
To conceal
The threatened shame, the parents of the Maid
Found means to hurry her away by night,
And unforewarned, that in some distant spot
She might remain shrouded in privacy,
Until the babe was born. When morning came,
The Lover, thus bereft, stung with his loss,
And all uncertain whither he should turn,
Chafed like a wild beast in the toils; but soon
Discovering traces of the fugitives,
Their steps he followed to the Maid's retreat.
Easily may the sequel be divined—
Walks to and fro—watchings at every hour;
And the fair Captive, who, whene'er she may,
Is busy at her casement as the swallow
Fluttering its pinions, almost within reach,
About the pendant nest, did thus espy
Her Lover!—thence a stolen interview,
Accomplished under friendly shade of night.

I pass the raptures of the pair;—such theme
Is, by innumerable poets, touched
In more delightful verse than skill of mine
Could fashion; chiefly by that darling bard
Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
And of the lark's note heard before its time,
And of the streaks that laced the severing clouds
In the unrelenting east.—Through all her courts
The vacant city slept; the busy winds,
That keep no certain intervals of rest,
Moved not; meanwhile the galaxy displayed
Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat
Aloft;—momentous but uneasy bliss!
To their full hearts the universe seemed hung
On that brief meeting's slender filament!

They parted; and the generous Vaudracour

Reached speedily the native threshold, bent
On making (so the Lovers had agreed)
A sacrifice of birthright to attain
A final portion from his father's hand;
Which granted, Bride and Bridegroom then would flee
To some remote and solitary place,
Shady as night, and beautiful as heaven,
Where they may live, with no one to behold
Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
But *now* of this no whisper; not the less,
If ever an obtrusive word were dropped
Touching the matter of his passion, still,
In his stern father's hearing, Vaudracour
Persisted openly that death alone
Should abrogate his human privilege
Divine, of swearing everlasting truth,
Upon the altar, to the Maid he loved.

'You shall be baffled in your mad intent
If there be justice in the court of France,'
Muttered the Father.—From these words the Youth
Conceived a terror; and, by night or day,
Stirred nowhere without weapons, that full soon
Found dreadful provocation: for at night,
When to his chamber he retired, attempt
Was made to seize him by three armèd men,
Acting, in furtherance of the father's will,
Under a private signet of the State.
One the rash Youth's ungovernable hand
Slew, and as quickly to a second gave
A perilous wound—he shuddered to behold
The breathless corse; then peacefully resigned
His person to the law, was lodged in prison,
And wore the fetters of a criminal.

Have you observed a tuft of wingèd seed
That, from the dandelion's naked stalk,
Mounted aloft, is suffered not to use
Its natural gifts for purposes of rest,
Driven by the autumnal whirlwind to and fro
Through the wide element? or have you marked
The heavier substance of a leaf-clad bough,
Within the vortex of a foaming flood,
Tormented? by such aid you may conceive
The perturbation that ensued;—ah, no!
Desperate the Maid—the Youth is stained with blood;
Unmatchable on earth is their disquiet!

Yet as the troubled seed and tortured bough
Is Man, subjected to despotic sway.

For him, by private influence with the Court,
Was pardon gained, and liberty procured;
But not without exaction of a pledge,
Which liberty and love dispersed in air.
He flew to her from whom they would divide him—
He clove to her who could not give him peace—
Yea, his first word of greeting was,—'All right
Is gone from me; my lately-towering hopes,
To the least fibre of their lowest root,
Are withered; thou no longer canst be mine,
I thine—the conscience-stricken must not woo
The unruffled Innocent,—I see thy face,
Behold thee, and my misery is complete!'

'One, are we not?' exclaimed the Maiden—'One,
For innocence and youth, for weal and woe?'
Then with the father's name she coupled words
Of vehement indignation; but the Youth
Checked her with filial meekness; for no thought
Uncharitable crossed his mind, no sense
Of hasty anger, rising in the eclipse
Of true domestic loyalty, did e'er
Find place within his bosom.—Once again
The persevering wedge of tyranny
Achieved their separation: and once more
Were they united,—to be yet again
Disparted, pitiable lot! But here
A portion of the tale may well be left
In silence, though my memory could add
Much how the Youth, in scanty space of time,
Was traversed from without; much, too, of thoughts
That occupied his days in solitude
Under privation and restraint; and what,
Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,
And what, through strong compunction for the past,
He suffered—breaking down in heart and mind!

Doomed to a third and last captivity,
His freedom he recovered on the eve
Of Julia's travail. When the babe was born,
Its presence tempted him to cherish schemes
Of future happiness. 'You shall return,
Julia,' said he, 'and to your father's house
Go with the child.—You have been wretched; yet
The silver shower, whose reckless burthen weighs

Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.
Malice, beholding you, will melt away.
Go!—'tis a town where both of us were born;
None will reproach you, for our truth is known;
And if, amid those once-bright bowers, our fate
Remain unpitied, pity is not in man.
With ornaments—the prettiest, nature yields
Or art can fashion, shall you deck our boy,
And feed his countenance with your own sweet looks,
Till no one can resist him.—Now, even now,
I see him sporting on the sunny lawn;
My father from the window sees him too;
Startled, as if some new-created thing
Enriched the earth, or Faery of the woods
Bounded before him;—but the unweeting Child
Shall by his beauty win his grandsire's heart,
So that it shall be softened, and our loves
End happily, as they began!'
These gleams
Appeared but seldom; oftener was he seen
Propping a pale and melancholy face
Upon the Mother's bosom; resting thus
His head upon one breast, while from the other
The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.
—That pillow is no longer to be thine,
Fond Youth! that mournful solace now must pass
Into the list of things that cannot be!
Unwedded Julia, terror-smitten, hears
The sentence, by her mother's lip pronounced,
That dooms her to a convent.—Who shall tell,
Who dares report, the tidings to the lord
Of her affections? so they blindly asked
Who knew not to what quiet depths a weight
Of agony had pressed the Sufferer down:
The word, by others dreaded, he can hear
Composed and silent, without visible sign
Of even the least emotion. Noting this,
When the impatient object of his love
Upbraided him with slackness, he returned
No answer, only took the mother's hand
And kissed it; seemingly devoid of pain,
Or care, that what so tenderly he pressed
Was a dependant on the obdurate heart
Of one who came to disunite their lives
For ever—sad alternative! preferred,
By the unbending Parents of the Maid,

To secret 'spousals meanly disavowed.
—So be it !
In the city he remained
A season after Julia had withdrawn
To those religious walls. He, too, departs—
Who with him ?—even the senseless Little-one.
With that sole charge he passed the city-gates,
For the last time, attendant by the side
Of a close chair, a litter, or sedan,
In which the Babe was carried. To a hill,
That rose a brief league distant from the town,
The dwellers in that house where he had lodged
Accompanied his steps, by anxious love
Impelled ;—they parted from him there, and stood
Watching below till he had disappeared
On the hill top. His eyes he scarcely took,
Throughout that journey, from the vehicle
(Slow-moving ark of all his hopes !) that veiled
The tender infant : and at every inn,
And under every hospitable tree
At which the bearers halted or reposed,
Laid him with timid care upon his knees,
And looked, as mothers ne'er were known to look,
Upon the nursling which his arms embraced.

This was the manner in which Vaudracour
Departed with his infant ; and thus reached
His father's house, where to the innocent child
Admittance was denied. The young man spake
No word of indignation or reproof,
But of his father begged, a last request,
That a retreat might be assigned to him,
Where in forgotten quiet he might dwell,
With such allowance as his wants required ;
For wishes he had none. To a lodge that stood
Deep in a forest, with leave given, at the age
Of four-and-twenty summers he withdrew ;
And thither took with him his motherless Babe,
And one domestic for their common needs,
An aged woman. It consoled him here
To attend upon the orphan, and perform
Obsequious service to the precious child,
Which, after a short time, by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father, died.—
The Tale I follow to its last recess
Of suffering or of peace, I know not which :
Theirs be the blame who caused the woe, not mine!

From this time forth he never shared a smile
With mortal creature. An Inhabitant
Of that same town, in which the pair had left
So lively a remembrance of their griefs,
By chance of business coming within reach
Of his retirement, to the forest lodge
Repaired, but only found the matron there,
Who told him that his pains were thrown away,
For that her Master never uttered word
To living thing—not even to her.—Behold!
While they were speaking, Vaudracour approached;
But, seeing some one near, as on the latch
Of the garden-gate his hand was laid, he shrunk—
And, like a shadow, glided out of view.
Shocked at his savage aspect, from the place
The visitor retired.
Thus lived the Youth
Cut off from all intelligence with man,
And shunning even the light of common day;
Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through France
Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own deep wrongs,
Rouse him: but in those solitary shades
His days he wasted, an imbecile mind!

1804

XXXI

THE IDIOT BOY

'TIS eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
The moon is up,—the sky is blue,
The owlet, in the moonlight air,
Shouts from nobody knows where;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

—Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy?

Scarcely a soul is out of bed;
Good Betty, put him down again;
His lips with joy they burr at you;
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

But Betty 's bent on her intent;
For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There 's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband 's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There 's none to help poor Susan Gale;
What must be done? what will betide?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good;
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,—
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has on the well-girt saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a *hurly-burly* now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The Boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, 'Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all,—
Come home again, whate'er befall,
My Johnny, do, I pray you, do.'

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too;
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the Pony's side,
On which her Idiot Boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for the poor Idiot Boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He 's idle all for very joy.

And, while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough motionless and dead:
The Moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That, till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship:
Oh! happy, happy, happy John.

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim,
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He 's at the guide-post—he turns right;
She watches till he 's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it;
Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
Her Messenger 's in merry tune;
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree;
For of this Pony there 's a rumour,
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
And, when he thinks, his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What speedy help her Boy will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
By this time is not quite so flurried:
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well;
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
'As sure as there 's a moon in heaven,'
Cries Betty, 'he 'll be back again;
They 'll both be here—'tis almost ten—
Both will be here before eleven.'

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'Tis on the stroke—'He must be near,'
Quoth Betty, 'and will soon be here,
As sure as there 's a moon in heaven.'

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight:
—The Moon 's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast:
'A little, idle, sauntering Thing!'
With other names, an endless string;
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty 's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
'How can it be he is so late?
The Doctor, he has made him wait;
Susan! they 'll both be here anon.'

And Susan 's growing worse and worse,
And Betty 's in a sad *quandary*;
And then there 's nobody to say
If she must go, or she must stay!
—She 's in a sad *quandary*.

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appears along the moonlight road;
There 's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty 's still at Susan's side.

And Susan now begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned;
Or lost, perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, 'God forbid it should be true!'
At the first word that Susan said
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
'Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

'I must be gone, I must away:
Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb'—
'Oh God forbid!' poor Susan cries.

'What can I do?' says Betty, going,
'What can I do to ease your pain?
Good Susan tell me, and I'll stay;
I fear you're in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again.'

'Nay, Betty, go! good Betty, go!
There's nothing that can ease my pain.'
Then off she hies; but with a prayer,
That God poor Susan's life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green;
'Twas Johnny, Johnny, everywhere.

And while she crossed the bridge, there came
A thought with which her heart is sore—
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon within the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There 's neither Johnny nor his Horse
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There 's neither Doctor nor his Guide.

'Oh saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he 's climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gipsy-folk.

'Or him that wicked Pony 's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he 's pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall.'

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
'If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying day.'

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor's self could hardly spare:
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The Pony had his share.

But now she 's fairly in the town,
And to the Doctor's door she hies;
'Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she 's at the Doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The Doctor at the casement shows
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

'Oh Doctor! Doctor! where 's my Johnny?'
'I 'm here, what is 't you want with me?'
'Oh Sir! you know I 'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
You know him—him you often see;

'He 's not so wise as some folks be':
'The devil take his wisdom!' said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
'What, Woman! should I know of him?'
And, grumbling, he went back to bed!

'O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my lost one here,
But he is neither far nor near,
Oh! what a wretched Mother I!'

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again;
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail;
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she 's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road:
'O cruel! I 'm almost threescore;
Such night as this was ne'er before,
There 's not a single soul abroad.'

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin,
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
'Oh dear, dear Pony! my sweet joy!
Oh carry back my Idiot Boy!
And we will ne'er o'erload thee more.'

A thought is come into her head:
The Pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well;
Perhaps he's gone along the dell,
And carried Johnny to the wood.

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be
To drown herself therein.

Oh Reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his Horse are doing!
What they've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All silent as a horseman-ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale.

And now, perhaps, is hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he;
Yon valley, now so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be!

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil!

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures:
O gentle Muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befell;
He surely met with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me,
Ye Muses! whom I love so well?

Who 's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

Unto his horse—there feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that 's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your Pony 's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She 's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the Pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the Horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell; but, while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she 's at the Pony's tail,
And now is at the Pony's head,—
On that side now, and now on this;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy;
She 's happy here, is happy there,
She is uneasy everywhere;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

'Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
You 've done your best, and that is all':
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the Pony's head
From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep, rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

Long time lay Susan lost in thought;
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her Messenger and Nurse;
And, as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body—it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And, while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

'Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured;
I'll to the wood.'—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she goes up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come;
She spies her Friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward wend;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

For, while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, 'Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen:
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true.'

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive;
No doubt too he the moon had seen;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus, to Betty's question, he
Made answer, like a traveller bold
(His very words I give to you),
'The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold!'
—Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

1798

XXXII

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
'The winds are now devising work for me!'
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and, if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.

The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,

Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,[1] a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

[1] Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.

As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. 'Isabel,' said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
'I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet, if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and, if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

'When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?'
At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy

To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—'Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night.'

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her Son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, 'Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die.'
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which requests were added, that forthwith

He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
'He shall depart to-morrow.' To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him:—'My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.——After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.'

Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, 'Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and, when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived:
But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go.'
At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
'This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But, I forget

My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave.'

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and, when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
'The prettiest letters that were ever seen.'
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named THE EVENING STAR
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

Oct. 11—Dec. 9, 1800.

XXXIII

THE WIDOW ON WINDERMERE SIDE

I

HOW beautiful when up a lofty height
Honour ascends among the humblest poor,
And feeling sinks as deep! See there the door

Of One, a Widow, left beneath a weight
Of blameless debt. On evil Fortune's spite
She wasted no complaint, but strove to make
A just repayment, both for conscience-sake
And that herself and hers should stand upright
In the world's eye. Her work when daylight failed
Paused not, and through the depth of night she kept
Such earnest vigils, that belief prevailed
With some, the noble Creature never slept;
But, one by one, the hand of death assailed
Her children, from her inmost heart bewept.

II

The Mother mourned, nor ceased her tears to flow,
Till a winter's noon-day placed her buried Son
Before her eyes, last child of many gone—
His raiment of angelic white, and lo!
His very feet bright as the dazzling snow
Which they are touching; yea far brighter, even
As that which comes, or seems to come, from heaven,
Surpasses aught these elements can show.
Much she rejoiced, trusting that from that hour
Whate'er befell she could not grieve or pine;
But the Transfigured, in and out of season,
Appeared, and spiritual presence gained a power
Over material forms that mastered reason.
Oh, gracious Heaven, in pity make her thine!

III

But why that prayer? as if to her could come
No good but by the way that leads to bliss
Through Death,—so judging we should judge amiss.
Since reason failed want is her threatened doom,
Yet frequent transports mitigate the gloom:
Nor of those maniacs is she one that kiss
The air or laugh upon a precipice;
No, passing through strange sufferings toward the tomb,
She smiles as if a martyr's crown were won:
Oft, when light breaks through clouds or waving trees,
With outspread arms and fallen upon her knees
The Mother hails in her descending Son
An Angel, and in earthly ecstasies
Her own angelic glory seems begun.

1837

XXXIV

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE

[The subject of the following poem is from the Orlandus of the author's friend, Kenelm Henry Digby: and the liberty is taken of inscribing it to him as an acknowledgment, however unworthy, of pleasure and instruction derived from his numerous and valuable writings, illustrative of the piety and chivalry of the olden time.]

I

YOU have heard 'a Spanish Lady
How she wooed an English man';[1]
Hear now of a fair Armenian,
Daughter of the proud Soldàn;
How she loved a Christian Slave, and told her pain
By word, look, deed, with hope that he might love again.

II

'Pluck that rose, it moves my liking,'
Said she, lifting up her veil;
'Pluck it for me, gentle gardener,
Ere it wither and grow pale.'
'Princess fair, I till the ground, but may not take
From twig or bed an humbler flower, even for your sake!'

III

'Grieved am I, submissive Christian!
To behold thy captive state;
Women, in your land, may pity
(May they not?) the unfortunate.'
'Yes, kind Lady! otherwise man could not bear
Life, which to every one that breathes is full of care.'

IV

'Worse than idle is compassion
If it end in tears and sighs;
Thee from bondage would I rescue
And from vile indignities;
Nurtured, as thy mien bespeaks, in high degree,
Look up—and help a hand that longs to set thee free.'

[1] See in Percy's *Reliques* that fine old Ballad, 'The Spanish Lady's Love'; from which Poem the form of stanza, as suitable to dialogue, is adopted.

V

'Lady! dread the wish, nor venture
In such peril to engage;
Think how it would stir against you
Your most loving father's rage:
Sad deliverance would it be, and yoked with shame,
Should troubles overflow on her from whom it came.'

VI

'Generous Frank! the just in effort
Are of inward peace secure:
Hardships for the brave encountered
Even the feeblest may endure:
If almighty grace through me thy chains unbind,
My father for slave's work may seek a slave in mind.'

VII

'Princess, at this burst of goodness,
My long-frozen heart grows warm!'
'Yet you make all courage fruitless,
Me to save from chance of harm:
Leading such companion I that gilded dome,
Yon minarets, would gladly leave for his worst home.'

VIII

'Feeling tunes your voice, fair Princess!
And your brow is free from scorn,
Else these words would come like mockery,
Sharper than the pointed thorn.'
'Whence the undeserved mistrust? Too wide apart
Our faith hath been,—O would that eyes could see the heart!'

IX

'Tempt me not, I pray; my doom is
These base implements to wield;
Rusty lance, I ne'er shall grasp thee,
Ne'er assoil my cobwebb'd shield!
Never see my native land, nor castle towers,
Nor Her who thinking of me there counts widowed hours.'

X

'Prisoner! pardon youthful fancies;
Wedded? If you *can*, say no!
Blessed is and be your consort;
Hopes I cherished—let them go!
Handmaid's privilege would leave my purpose free,
Without another link to my felicity.'

XI

'Wedded love with loyal Christians,
Lady, is a mystery rare;
Body, heart, and soul in union,
Make one being of a pair.'
'Humble love in me would look for no return,
Soft as a guiding star that cheers, but cannot burn.'

XII

'Gracious Allah! by such title
Do I dare to thank the God,
Him who thus exalts thy spirit,
Flower of an unchristian sod!
Or hast thou put off wings which thou in heaven dost wear?
What have I seen, and heard, or dreamt? where am I? where?'

XIII

Here broke off the dangerous converse:
Less impassioned words might tell
How the pair escaped together,
Tears not wanting, nor a knell
Of sorrow in her heart while through her father's door,
And from her narrow world, she passed for evermore.

XIV

But affections higher, holier,
Urged her steps; she shrunk from trust
In a sensual creed that trampled
Woman's birthright into dust.
Little be the wonder then, the blame be none,
If she, a timid Maid, hath put such boldness on.

XV

Judge both Fugitives with knowledge:
In those old romantic days
Mighty were the soul's commandments
To support, restrain, or raise.
Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,
But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear.

XVI

Thought infirm ne'er came between them,
Whether printing desert sands
With accordant steps, or gathering
Forest-fruit with social hands;

Or whispering like two reeds that in the cold moonbeam
Bend with the breeze their heads beside a crystal stream.

XVII

On a friendly deck reposing
They at length for Venice steer;
There, when they had closed their voyage,
One, who daily on the pier
Watched for tidings from the East, beheld his Lord,
Fell down and clasped his knees for joy, not uttering word.

XVIII

Mutual was the sudden transport;
Breathless questions followed fast,
Years contracting to a moment,
Each word greedier than the last;
'Hie thee to the Countess, friend! return with speed,
And of this Stranger speak by whom her lord was freed.

XIX

'Say that I, who might have languished,
Drooped and pined till life was spent,
Now before the gates of Stolberg
My Deliverer would present
For a crowning recompense, the precious grace
Of her who in my heart still holds her ancient place.

XX

'Make it known that my Companion
Is of royal eastern blood,
Thirsting after all perfection,
Innocent, and meek, and good,
Though with misbelievers bred; but that dark night
Will holy Church disperse by beams of gospel-light.'

XXI

Swiftly went that grey-haired Servant,
Soon returned a trusty Page
Charged with greetings, benedictions,
Thanks and praises, each a gage
For a sunny thought to cheer the Stranger's way,
Her virtuous scruples to remove, her fears allay.

XXII

And how blest the Reunited,
While beneath their castle-walls
Runs a deafening noise of welcome!—
Blest, though every tear that falls

Doth in its silence of past sorrow tell,
And makes a meeting seem most like a dear farewell.

XXIII

Through a haze of human nature,
Glorified by heavenly light,
Looked the beautiful Deliverer
On that overpowering sight,
While across her virgin cheek pure blushes strayed,
For every tender sacrifice her heart had made.

XXIV

On the ground the weeping Countess
Knelt, and kissed the Stranger's hand;
Act of soul-devoted homage,
Pledge of an eternal band:
Nor did aught of future days that kiss belie,
Which, with a generous shout, the crowd did ratify.

XXV

Constant to the fair Armenian,
Gentle pleasures round her moved,
Like a tutelary spirit
Reverenced, like a sister loved.
Christian meekness smoothed for all the path of life,
Who, loving most, should wiseliest love, their only strife.

XXVI

Mute memento of that union
In a Saxon church survives,
Where a cross-legged Knight lies sculptured
As between two wedded Wives——
Figures with armorial signs of race and birth,
And the vain rank the pilgrims bore while yet on earth.

1830

XXXV

LOVING AND LIKING

IRREGULAR VERSES ADDRESSED TO A CHILD

(BY MY SISTER)

THERE 'S more in words than I can teach:
Yet listen, Child!—I would not preach;
But only give some plain directions
To guide your speech and your affections.
Say not you *love* a roasted fowl,

But you may love a screaming owl,
And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
That crawls from his secure abode
Within the mossy garden wall
When evening dews begin to fall.
Oh! mark the beauty of his eye:
What wonders in that circle lie!
So clear, so bright, our fathers said
He wears a jewel in his head!
And when, upon some showery day,
Into a path or public way
A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
Startling the timid as they pass,
Do you observe him, and endeavour
To take the intruder into favour;
Learning from him to find a reason
For a light heart in a dull season.
And you may love him in the pool,
That is for him a happy school,
In which he swims as taught by nature,
Fit pattern for a human creature,
Glancing amid the water bright,
And sending upward sparkling light.

Nor blush if o'er your heart be stealing
A love for things that have no feeling:
The spring's first rose by you espied,
May fill your breast with joyful pride;
And you may love the strawberry-flower,
And love the strawberry in its bower;
But when the fruit, so often praised
For beauty, to your lip is raised,
Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
But *like* it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.

Long may you love your pensioner mouse,
Though one of a tribe that torment the house:
Nor dislike for her cruel sport the cat,
Deadly foe both of mouse and rat;
Remember she follows the law of her kind,
And Instinct is neither wayward nor blind.
Then think of her beautiful gliding form,
Her tread that would scarcely crush a worm,
And her soothing song by the winter fire,
Soft as the dying throb of the lyre.

I would not circumscribe your love:
It may soar with the eagle and brood with the dove,

May pierce the earth with the patient mole,
Or track the hedgehog to his hole.
Loving and liking are the solace of life,
Rock the cradle of joy, smooth the death-bed of strife.
You love your father and your mother,
Your grown-up and your baby brother;
You love your sister and your friends,
And countless blessings which God sends:
And while these right affections play,
You *live* each moment of your day;
They lead you on to full content,
And likings fresh and innocent,
That store the mind, the memory feed,
And prompt to many a gentle deed:
But *likings* come, and pass away;
'Tis *love* that remains till our latest day:
Our heavenward guide is holy love,
And will be our bliss with saints above.

1832

XXXVI

FAREWELL LINES

'HIGH bliss is only for a higher state,'
But, surely, if severe afflictions borne
With patience merit the reward of peace,
Peace ye deserve; and may the solid good,
Sought by a wise though late exchange, and here
With bounteous hand beneath a cottage-roof
To you accorded, never be withdrawn,
Nor for the world's best promises renounced.
Most soothing was it for a welcome Friend,
Fresh from the crowded city, to behold
That lonely union, privacy so deep,
Such calm employments, such entire content.
So when the rain is over, the storm laid,
A pair of herons oft-times have I seen,
Upon a rocky islet, side by side,
Drying their feathers in the sun, at ease;
And so, when night with grateful gloom had fallen,
Two glow-worms in such nearness that they shared,
As seemed, their soft self-satisfying light,
Each with the other, on the dewy ground,
Where He that made them blesses their repose.—
When wandering among lakes and hills I note,
Once more, those creatures thus by nature paired,

And guarded in their tranquil state of life,
Even, as your happy presence to my mind
Their union brought, will they repay the debt,
And send a thankful spirit back to you,
With hope that we, dear Friends! shall meet again.

Published 1842

XXXVII

THE REDBREAST

(SUGGESTED IN A WESTMORELAND COTTAGE)

DRIVEN in by Autumn's sharpening air
From half-stripped woods and pastures bare,
Brisk Robin seeks a kindlier home:
Not like a beggar is he come,
But enters as a looked-for guest,
Confiding in his ruddy breast,
As if it were a natural shield
Charged with a blazon on the field,
Due to that good and pious deed
Of which we in the Ballad read.
But pensive fancies putting by,
And wild-wood sorrows, speedily
He plays the expert ventriloquist;
And, caught by glimpses now—now missed,
Puzzles the listener with a doubt
If the soft voice he throws about
Comes from within doors or without!
Was ever such a sweet confusion,
Sustained by delicate illusion?
He's at your elbow—to your feeling
The notes are from the floor or ceiling;
And there's a riddle to be guessed,
Till you have marked his heaving chest
And busy throat, whose sink and swell
Betray the Elf that loves to dwell
In Robin's bosom as a chosen cell.

Heart-pleased we smile upon the Bird
If seen, and with like pleasure stirred
Commend him, when he 's only heard.
But small and fugitive our gain
Compared with *hers* who long hath lain,
With languid limbs and patient head
Reposing on a lone sick-bed;
Where now she daily hears a strain
That cheats her of too busy cares,

Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.
And who but this dear Bird beguiled
The fever of that pale-faced Child;
Now cooling, with his passing wing,
Her forehead, like a breeze of Spring:
Recalling now, with descant soft
Shed round her pillow from aloft,
Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh,
And the invisible sympathy
Of 'Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Blessing the bed she lies upon?'[1]
And sometimes, just as listening ends
In slumber, with the cadence blends
A dream of that low-warbled hymn
Which old folk, fondly pleased to trim
Lamps of faith, now burning dim,
Say that the Cherubs, carved in stone,
When clouds gave way at dead of night
And the ancient church was filled with light,
Used to sing in heavenly tone,
Above and round the sacred places
They guard with wingèd baby-faces.

Thrice happy Creature! in all lands
Nurtured by hospitable hands:
Free entrance to this cot has he,
Entrance and exit both *yet* free;
And when the keen unruffled weather,
That thus brings man and bird together,
Shall with its pleasantness be past,
And casement closed and door made fast,
To keep at bay the howling blast,
He needs not fear the season's rage,
For the whole house is Robin's cage.
Whether the bird flit here or there,
O'er table *lilt*, or perch on chair,
Though some may frown and make a stir,
To scare him as a trespasser,
And he belike will flinch or start,
Good friends he has to take his part;
One chiefly, who with voice and look
Pleads for him from the chimney-nook,
Where sits the Dame, and wears away

[1] The words—

'Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on,'

are part of a child's prayer, still in general use through the northern counties.

Her long and vacant holiday;
With images about her heart,
Reflected from the years gone by
On human nature's second infancy.
1834

XXXVIII

HER EYES ARE WILD

I

HER eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone:
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

II

'Sweet babe! they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me;
But safe as in a cradle here
My lovely baby! thou shalt be:
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

III

'A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breast, and pulled at me;
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

IV

'Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest.
The breeze I see is in the tree:
It comes to cool my babe and me.

V

'Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl:
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;
Then happy lie; for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

VI

'Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion will I be;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I'll build an Indian bower; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed:
And, if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring.

VII

'Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest;
'Tis all thine own!—and, if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love;
And what if my poor cheek be brown?

'Tis well for me thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

VIII

'Dread not their taunts, my little Life;
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stayed:
From him no harm my babe can take;
But he, poor man! is wretched made;
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.

IX

'I'll teach my boy the sweetest things:
I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
—Where art thou gone, my own dear child?
What wicked looks are those I see?
Alas! Alas! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me:
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.

X

'Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!
For I thy own dear mother am:
My love for thee has well been tried:
I've sought thy father far and wide.
I know the poisons of the shade;
I know the earth-nuts fit for food:
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid:
We'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!
And there, my babe, we'll live for aye.'

1798

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

ADVERTISEMENT

By persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little Incidents must have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents, and renew the gratification of such feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends, and the following Poems written in consequence.

I

IT was an April morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves seemed eager to urge on
The steps of June; as if their various hues
Were only hindrances that stood between
Them and their object: but, meanwhile, prevailed
Such an entire contentment in the air
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, showed as if the countenance
With which it looked on this delightful day
Were native to the summer.—Up the brook
I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all,
Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice
Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
The shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush,
Vied with this waterfall, and made a song,
Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild growth

Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here;
But 'twas the foliage of the rocks—the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And, on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain-cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
'Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
My EMMA, I will dedicate to thee.'
——Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.

1800

II

TO JOANNA

AMID the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth; and there you learned,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fireside,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow to meet the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity
Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse,
However trivial, if you thence be taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past,
Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbour, the old steeple-tower,

The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
Came forth to greet me; and, when he had asked,
'How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid!
And when will she return to us?' he paused;
And, after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
Reviving obsolete idolatry,
I, like a Runic Priest, in characters
Of formidable size had chiselled out
Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest-side.
—Now, by those dear immunities of heart
Engendered between malice and true love,
I was not loth to be so catechised,
And this was my reply:—'As it befell,
One summer morning we had walked abroad
At break of day, Joanna and myself.
—'Twas that delightful season when the broom,
Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
And when we came in front of that tall rock
That eastward looks, I there stopped short—and stood
Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
—When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
The Rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again;
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-scar,
And the tall Steep of Silver-how, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
His speaking-trumpet;—back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.
—Now whether,' said I to our cordial Friend,
Who in the hey-day of astonishment

Smiled in my face, 'this were in simple truth
A work accomplished by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched
With dreams and visionary impulses
To me alone imparted, sure I am
That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
And, while we both were listening, to my side
The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
To shelter from some object of her fear.
—And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
In memory of affections old and true,
I chiselled out in those rude characters
Joanna's name deep in the living stone :—
And I, and all who dwell by my fireside,
Have called the lovely rock, JOANNA'S ROCK.'
1800

NOTE.—In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several Inscriptions, upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of time, and the rudeness of the workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic. They are, without doubt, Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which, flowing through the lakes of Grasmere and Rydale, falls into Wynandermere. On Helm-crag, that impressive single mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those fissures or caverns, which in the language of the country are called dungeons. Most of the mountains here mentioned immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere; of the others, some are at a considerable distance, but they belong to the same cluster.

III

THERE is an Eminence,—of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun;
We can behold it from our orchard-seat;
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this Peak, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favourite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth

Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name.
1800

IV

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and crags,
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy:
And there myself and two beloved Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
——Ill suits the road with one in haste; but we
Played with our time; and, as we strolled along,
It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore—
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!
And starting off again with freak as sudden;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul.
——And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern,
So stately, of the Queen Osmunda named;
Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
—So fared we that bright morning: from the fields,
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,

And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
'Improvident and reckless,' we exclaimed,
'The Man must be, who thus can lose a day
Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time.'
Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turned his head
To greet us—and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained.—
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
—Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast;
And Point Rash-Judgment is the Name it bears.

1800

V

TO M. H.

OUR walk was far among the ancient trees:
There was no road, nor any woodman's path;
But a thick umbrage—checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf

Beneath the branches—of itself had made
A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a well,
Or some stone-basin which the herdsman's hand
Had shaped for their refreshment; nor did sun,
Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
But as a blessing to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself;
The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
Unknown to them; but it is beautiful;
And if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it, that in his death-hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts:
And therefore, my sweet MARY, this still Nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from You!

Dec. 1799

VI

WHEN, to the attractions of the busy world
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful Vale,
Sharp season followed of continual storm
In deepest winter; and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road, were clogged
With frequent showers of snow. Upon a hill,
At a short distance from my cottage, stands
A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unincumbered floor.
Here, in safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And sometimes on a speck of visible earth,
The redbreast near me hopped; nor was I loth
To sympathise with vulgar coppice birds
That, for protection from the nipping blast,
Hither repaired.—A single beech-tree grew
Within this grove of firs! and, on the fork
Of that one beech, appeared a thrush's nest;
A last year's nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
As gave sure sign that they, who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home

Amid the fir-trees, all the summer long
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes
A few sheep, stragglers from some mountain-flock,
Would watch my motions with suspicious stare,
From the remotest outskirts of the grove,—
Some nook where they had made their final stand,
Huddling together from two fears—the fear
Of me and of the storm. Full many an hour
Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
Had been so thickly planted, and had thriven
In such perplexed and intricate array,
That vainly did I seek beneath their stems
A length of open space, where to and fro
My feet might move without concern or care;
And, baffled thus, though earth from day to day
Was fettered, and the air by storm disturbed,
I ceased the shelter to frequent,—and prized,
Less than I wished to prize, that calm recess.

The snows dissolved, and genial Spring returned
To clothe the fields with verdure. Other haunts
Meanwhile were mine; till, one bright April day,
By chance retiring from the glare of noon
To this forsaken covert, there I found
A hoary pathway traced between the trees,
And winding on with such an easy line
Along a natural opening, that I stood
Much wondering how I could have sought in vain
For what was now so obvious. To abide,
For an allotted interval of ease,
Under my cottage-roof, had gladly come
From the wild sea a cherished Visitant;
And with the sight of this same path—begun,
Begun and ended, in the shady grove,
Pleasant conviction flashed upon my mind
That, to this opportune recess allured,
He had surveyed it with a finer eye,
A heart more wakeful; and had worn the track
By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
In that habitual restlessness of foot
That haunts the Sailor measuring o'er and o'er
His short domain upon the vessel's deck,
While she pursues her course through the dreary sea.

When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant shore,
And taken thy first leave of those green hills

And rocks that were the play-ground of thy youth,
Year followed year, my Brother! and we two,
Conversing not, knew little in what mould
Each other's mind was fashioned; and at length,
When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
Between us there was little other bond
Than common feelings of fraternal love.
But thou, a School-boy, to the sea hadst carried
Undying recollections; Nature there
Was with thee; she, who loved us both, she still
Was with thee; and even so didst thou become
A *silent* Poet; from the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man's touch.
—Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone;
Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
Could I withhold thy honoured name,—and now
I love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns
Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong;
And there I sit at evening, when the steep
Of Silver-how, and Grasmere's peaceful lake,
And one green island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark firs, a visionary scene!
And, while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost.
Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while Thou,
Muttering the verses which I muttered first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing thoughtfully the vessel's deck
In some far region, here, while o'er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,
The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path;—for aught I know,
Timing my steps to thine; and, with a store
Of undistinguishable sympathies,
Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
When we, and others whom we love, shall meet
A second time, in Grasmere's happy Vale

1802

Note.—This wish was not granted; the lamented Person not long after perished by shipwreck, in discharge of his duty as Commander of the Honourable East India Company's Vessel, the *Earl of Abergavenny*.

VII

FORTH from a jutting ridge, around whose base
Winds our deep Vale, two heath-clad Rocks ascend
In fellowship, the loftiest of the pair
Rising to no ambitious height; yet both,
O'er lake and stream, mountain and flowery mead,
Unfolding prospects fair as human eyes
Ever beheld. Up-led with mutual help,
To one or other brow of those twin Peaks
Were two adventurous Sisters wont to climb,
And took no note of the hour while thence they gazed,
The blooming heath their couch, gazed, side by side,
In speechless admiration. I, a witness
And frequent sharer of their calm delight
With thankful heart, to either Eminence
Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.
Now are they parted, far as Death's cold hand
Hath power to part the Spirits of those who love
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles—
That, while the generations of mankind
Follow each other to their hiding-place
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced
With like command of beauty—grant your aid
For MARY's humble, SARAH's silent, claim,
That their pure joy in nature may survive
From age to age in blended memory.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

I

A MORNING EXERCISE

FANCY, who leads the pastimes of the glad,
Full oft is pleased a wayward dart to throw;
Sending sad shadows after things not sad,
Peopling the harmless fields with signs of woe:
Beneath her sway, a simple forest cry
Becomes an echo of man's misery.

Blithe ravens croak of death; and when the owl
Tries his two voices for a favourite strain—
Tu-whit—To-whoo! the unsuspecting fowl
Forebodes mishap or seems but to complain;
Fancy, intent to harass and annoy,
Can thus pervert the evidence of joy.

Through border wilds where naked Indians stray,
Myriads of notes attest her subtle skill;
A feathered task-master cries, 'WORK AWAY!'
And in thy iteration, 'WHIP POOR WILL!'[1]
Is heard the spirit of a toil-worn slave,
Lashed out of life, not quiet in the grave.

What wonder? at her bidding, ancient lays
Stepped in dire grief the voice of Philomel;
And that fleet messenger of summer days,
The Swallow, twittered subject to like spell;
But ne'er could Fancy bend the buoyant Lark
To melancholy service—hark! O hark!

The daisy sleeps upon the dewy lawn,
Not lifting yet the head that evening bowed;
But *He* is risen, a later star of dawn,
Glittering and twinkling near yon rosy cloud;
Bright gem instinct with music, vocal spark;
The happiest bird that sprang out of the Ark!

[1] See Waterton's *Wanderings in South America.*

Hail, blest above all kinds!—Supremely skilled
Restless with fixed to balance, high with low,
Thou leav'st the halcyon free her hopes to build
On such forbearance as the deep may show;
Perpetual flight, unchecked by earthly ties,
Leav'st to the wandering bird of paradise.

Faithful, though swift as lightning, the meek dove;
Yet more hath Nature reconciled in thee;
So constant with thy downward eye of love,
Yet, in aërial singleness, so free;
So humble, yet so ready to rejoice
In power of wing and never-wearied voice.

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler!—that love-prompted strain
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

How would it please old Ocean to partake,
With sailors longing for a breeze in vain,
The harmony thy notes most gladly make
Where earth resembles most his own domain!
Urania's self might welcome with pleased ear
These matins mounting towards her native sphere.

Chanter by heaven attracted, whom no bars
To daylight known deter from that pursuit,
'Tis well that some sage instinct, when the stars
Come forth at evening, keeps Thee still and mute;
For not an eyelid could to sleep incline
Wert thou among them, singing as they shine!

1828

II

A FLOWER GARDEN

AT COLEORTON HALL, LEICESTERSHIRE

TELL me, ye Zephyrs! that unfold,
While fluttering o'er this gay Recess,
Pinions that fanned the teeming mould
Of Eden's blissful wilderness,
Did only softly-stealing hours
There close the peaceful lives of flowers?

Say, when the *moving* creatures saw
All kinds commingled without fear,
Prevailed a like indulgent law
For the still growths that prosper here?
Did wanton fawn and kid forbear
The half-blown rose, the lily spare?

Or peeped they often from their beds,
And prematurely disappeared,
Devoured like pleasure ere it spreads
A bosom to the sun endeared?
If such their harsh untimely doom,
It falls not *here* on bud or bloom.

All summer-long the happy Eve
Of this fair Spot her flowers may bind,
Nor e'er, with ruffled fancy, grieve,
From the next glance she casts, to find
That love for little things by Fate
Is rendered vain as love for great.

Yet, where the guardian fence is wound,
So subtly are our eyes beguiled,
We see not nor suspect a bound,
No more than in some forest wild;
The sight is free as air—or crost
Only by art in nature lost.

And, though the jealous turf refuse
By random footsteps to be prest,
And feed on never-sullied dews,
Ye, gentle breezes from the west,
With all the ministers of hope
Are tempted to this sunny slope!

And hither throngs of birds resort;
Some, inmates lodged in shady nests,
Some, perched on stems of stately port
That nod to welcome transient guests;
While hare and leveret, seen at play,
Appear not more shut out than they.

Apt emblem (for reproof of pride)
This delicate Enclosure shows
Of modest kindness, that would hide
The firm protection she bestows;
Of manners, like its viewless fence,
Ensuring peace to innocence.

Thus spake the moral Muse—her wing
Abruptly spreading to depart,
She left that farewell offering,
Memento for some docile heart;
That may respect the good old age
When Fancy was Truth's willing Page;
And Truth would skim the flowery glade,
Though entering but as Fancy's Shade.

1824

III

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rushed o'er the wood with startling sound;
Then—all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered round.
Where leafless oaks towered high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o'er,
And all the year the bower is green.
But see! where'er the hailstones drop
The withered leaves all skip and hop;
There's not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and everywhere
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the minstrelsy.

1798

IV

THE WATERFALL AND THE EGLANTINE

I

'BEGONE, thou fond presumptuous Elf,'
Exclaimed an angry Voice,
'Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!'
A small Cascade fresh swoln with snows
Thus threatened a poor Briar-rose,

That, all bespattered with his foam,
And dancing high and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

II

'Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I 'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling.'
The Flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Briar suffered long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past;
But, seeing no relief, at last
He ventured to reply.

III

'Ah!' said the Briar, 'blame me not;
Why should we dwell in strife?
We who in this sequestered spot
Once lived a happy life!
You stirred me on my rocky bed—
What pleasure through my veins you spread
The summer long, from day to day,
My leaves you freshened and bedewed;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

IV

'When spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreaths to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours
I sheltered you with leaves and flowers;
And in my leaves—now shed and gone,
The linnet lodged, and for us two
Chanted his pretty songs, when you
Had little voice or none.

V

'But now proud thoughts are in your breast—
What grief is mine you see,
Ah! would you think, even yet how blest
Together we might be!

Though of both leaf and flower bereft,
Some ornaments to me are left—
Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
With which I, in my humble way,
Would deck you many a winter day,
A happy Eglantine!'

VI

What more he said I cannot tell,
The Torrent down the rocky dell
Came thundering loud and fast;
I listened, nor aught else could hear;
The Briar quaked—and much I fear
Those accents were his last.

1800

V

THE OAK AND THE BROOM

A PASTORAL

I

HIS simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills;
A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.
One winter's night, when through the trees
The wind was roaring, on his knees
His youngest born did Andrew hold:
And while the rest, a ruddy quire,
Were seated round their blazing fire,
This Tale the Shepherd told.

II

'I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat!
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon—
The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm south-west:
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus addressed:—

III

"Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay,
Along this mountain's edge,
The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up! and think, above your head
What trouble, surely, will be bred;
Last night I heard a crash—'tis true,
The splinters took another road—
I see them yonder—what a load
For such a Thing as you!

IV

"You are preparing as before,
To deck your slender shape;
And yet, just three years back—no more—
You had a strange escape:
Down from yon cliff a fragment broke;
It thundered down, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way;
This ponderous block was caught by me,
And o'er your head as you may see,
'Tis hanging to this day!

V

"If breeze or bird to this rough steep
Your kind's first seed did bear;
The breeze had better been asleep,
The bird caught in a snare:
For you and your green twigs decoy
The little witless shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower;
And, trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon!
Will perish in one hour.

VI

"From me this friendly warning take"—
The Broom began to doze,
And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose:
"My thanks for your discourse are due;
That more than what you say is true
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

VII

'"Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage;
My father many a happy year
Spread here his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

VIII

'"Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favoured plant!
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And, when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

IX

'"The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade the mother-ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy which they partake,
It is a joy to me."

X

'Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed;
But in the branches of the oak
Two ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees
To rest, or murmur there.

XI

'One night, my Children! from the north
There came a furious blast;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.
The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day.'

1800

VI

TO A SEXTON

LET thy wheel-barrow alone—
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy bone-house bone on bone?
'Tis already like a hill
In a field of battle made,
Where three thousand skulls are laid;
These died in peace each with the other,—
Father, sister, friend, and brother.

Mark the spot to which I point!
From this platform, eight feet square,
Take not even a finger-joint:
Andrew's whole fireside is there.
Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly daughter lies,
From weakness now and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride—
How he glories, when he sees
Roses, lilies, side by side,
Violets in families!
By the heart of Man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,
Thou, too heedless, art the Warden
Of a far superior garden.

Thus then, each to other dear,
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there, and Susan here,
Neighbours in mortality.

And, should I live through sun and rain
Seven widowed years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover!

1799

VII

TO THE DAISY

'Her[1] divine skill taught me this,
That from every thing I saw
I could some invention draw,
And raise pleasure to her height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling;
By a Daisy whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree;
She could more infuse in me
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man.'

G. Wither.

IN youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake
Of Thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few grey hairs;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
That she may sun thee;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane;
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
Yet nothing daunted,
Nor grieved if thou be set at nought:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.

[1] His Muse.

Be violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
  Her head impearling,
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
  The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
  Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art!—a friend at hand, to scare
  His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
  Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
  Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
  A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
  Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
  With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews oppress
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
  Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course,—when day 's begun
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time;—thou not in vain
Art Nature's favourite.[1]

1802

VIII

TO THE SAME FLOWER

WITH little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace
Which Love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;

[1] See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.

A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next—and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish—and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some faery bold
In fight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee!

Bright *Flower*! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

1802

IX

THE GREEN LINNET

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!

Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

1803

X

TO A SKY-LARK

UP with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.

There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

1805

XI

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE[1]

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there 's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There 's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I 'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower!—I 'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

[1] Common Pilewort.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we 've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude:
Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home;
Spring is coming, Thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane;—there 's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine.

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

1802

XII

TO THE SAME FLOWER

PLEASURES newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet:
February last, my heart
First at sight of thee was glad;
All unheard of as thou art,
Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
Whosoe'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the sign-board in a blaze,
When the rising sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking 'kerchief-plots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sighed to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sighed to think I read a book
Only read, perhaps, by me;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and Thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient primrose sits
Like a beggar in the cold,
Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
Slip'st into thy sheltering hold;
Liveliest of the vernal train
When ye all are out again.

Drawn by what peculiar spell,
By what charm of sight or smell,
Does the dim-eyed curious Bee,
Labouring for her waxen cells,
Fondly settle upon Thee
Prized above all buds and bells
Opening daily at thy side,
By the season multiplied?

Thou art not beyond the moon,
But a thing 'beneath our shoon':
Led the bold Discoverer thrid
In his bark the polar sea;
Rear who will a pyramid;
Praise it is enough for me,
If there be but three or four
Who will love my little Flower.

1802

XIII

THE SEVEN SISTERS

OR, THE SOLITUDE OF BINNORIE

I

SEVEN Daughters had Lord Archibald,
All children of one mother:
You could not say in one short day
What love they bore each other.
A garland of seven lilies wrought!
Seven Sisters that together dwell;
But he, bold Knight as ever fought,
Their Father, took of them no thought,
He loved the wars so well.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

II

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a Rover brave
To Binnorie is steering:
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne;
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark! the Leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle horn.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

III

Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The Seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right—
Of your fair household, Father-knight,
Methinks you take small heed!
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

IV

Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And, over hill and hollow,
With menace proud, and insult loud,
The youthful Rovers follow.
Cried they, 'Your Father loves to roam:
Enough for him to find
The empty house when he comes home;
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind!'
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

V

Some close behind, some side by side,
Like clouds in stormy weather;
They run, and cry, 'Nay, let us die,
And let us die together.'

A lake was near; the shore was steep;
There never foot had been;
They ran, and with a desperate leap
Together plunged into the deep,
Nor ever more were seen.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

VI

The stream that flows out of the lake,
As through the glen it rambles,
Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
For those seven lovely Campbells.
Seven little Islands, green and bare,
Have risen from out the deep:
The fishers say, those sisters fair
By faeries all are buried there,
And there together sleep.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

1800

XIV

WHO fancied what a pretty sight
This Rock would be if edged around
With living snow-drops? circlet bright!
How glorious to this orchard-ground!
Who loved the little Rock, and set
Upon its head this coronet?

Was it the humour of a child?
Or rather of some gentle maid,
Whose brows, the day that she was styled
The shepherd-queen, were thus arrayed?
Of man mature, or matron sage?
Or old man toying with his age?

I asked—'twas whispered; The device
To each and all might well belong:
It is the Spirit of Paradise
That prompts such work, a Spirit strong,
That gives to all the self-same bent
Where life is wise and innocent.

1803

XV

THE REDBREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY

ART thou the bird whom Man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The bird that comes about our doors
When Autumn-winds are sobbing?
Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland?
The bird that by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,
The darling of children and men?
Could Father Adam[1] open his eyes
And see this sight beneath the skies,
He 'd wish to close them again.
—If the Butterfly knew but his friend,
Hither his flight he would bend;
And find his way to me,
Under the branches of the tree:
In and out, he darts about;
Can this be the bird, to man so good,
That, after their bewildering,
Covered with leaves the little children,
So painfully in the wood?

What ailed thee, Robin, that thou couldst pursue
A beautiful creature,
That is gentle by nature?
Beneath the summer sky
From flower to flower let him fly;
'Tis all that he wishes to do.
The cheerer Thou of our in-door sadness,
He is the friend of our summer gladness:
What hinders, then, that ye should be
Playmates in the sunny weather,
And fly about in the air together!
His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,
A crimson as bright as thine own:
Wouldst thou be happy in thy nest,
O pious Bird! whom man loves best,
Love him, or leave him alone!

1802

[1] See *Paradise Lost*, Book XI., where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the Eagle chasing 'two Birds of gayest plume,' and the gentle Hart and Hind pursued by their enemy.

XVI

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL

FOUNDED UPON A BELIEF PREVALENT AMONG THE PASTORAL VALES OF WESTMORELAND

SWIFTLY turn the murmuring wheel!
Night has brought the welcome hour,
When the weary fingers feel
Help, as if from faery power;
Dewy night o'ershades the ground;
Turn the swift wheel round and round!

Now, beneath the starry sky,
Couch the widely-scattered sheep;—
Ply the pleasant labour, ply!
For the spindle, while they sleep,
Runs with speed more smooth and fine,
Gathering up a trustier line.

Short-lived likings may be bred
By a glance from fickle eyes;
But true love is like the thread
Which the kindly wool supplies,
When the flocks are all at rest
Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

1812

XVII

HINT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

FOR CERTAIN POLITICAL PRETENDERS

'WHO but hails the sight with pleasure
When the wings of genius rise,
Their ability to measure
With great enterprise;
But in man was ne'er such daring
As yon Hawk exhibits, pairing
His brave spirit with the war in
The stormy skies!

'Mark him, how his power he uses,
Lays it by, at will resumes!
Mark, ere for his haunt he chooses
Clouds and utter glooms!

There, he wheels in downward mazes;
Sunward now his flight he raises,
Catches fire, as seems, and blazes
With uninjured plumes!'—

ANSWER

'Stranger, 'tis no act of courage
Which aloft thou dost discern;
No bold *bird* gone forth to forage
'Mid the tempest stern;
But such mockery as the nations
See, when public perturbations
Lift men from their native stations,
Like yon TUFT OF FERN;

'Such it is; the aspiring creature
Soaring on undaunted wing,
(So you fancied) is by nature
A dull helpless thing,
Dry and withered, light and yellow;—
That to be the tempest's fellow!
Wait—and you shall see how hollow
Its endeavouring!'

1817

XVIII

ON SEEING A NEEDLECASE IN THE FORM OF A HARP

THE WORK OF E. M. S.

FROWNS are on every Muse's face,
Reproaches from their lips are sent,
That mimicry should thus disgrace
The noble Instrument.

A very Harp in all but size!
Needles for strings in apt gradation!
Minerva's self would stigmatize
The unclassic profanation.

Even her *own* needle that subdued
Arachne's rival spirit,
Though wrought in Vulcan's happiest mood,
Such honour could not merit.

And this, too, from the Laureate's Child,
A living lord of melody!
How will her Sire be reconciled
To the refined indignity?

I spake, when whispered a low voice,
'Bard! moderate your ire;
Spirits of all degrees rejoice
In presence of the lyre.

'The Minstrels of Pygmean bands,
Dwarf Genii, moonlight-loving Fays,
Have shells to fit their tiny hands
And suit their slender lays.

'Some, still more delicate of ear,
Have lutes (believe my words)
Whose framework is of gossamer,
While sunbeams are the chords.

'Gay Sylphs this miniature will court,
Made vocal by their brushing wings,
And sullen Gnomes will learn to sport
Around its polished strings;

'Whence strains to love-sick maiden dear,
While in her lonely bower she tries
To cheat the thought she cannot cheer,
By fanciful embroideries.

'Trust, angry Bard! a knowing Sprite,
Nor think the Harp her lot deplores;
Though 'mid the stars the Lyre shine bright,
Love *stoops* as fondly as he soars.'

1827

XIX

TO A LADY

IN ANSWER TO A REQUEST THAT I WOULD WRITE HER A POEM UPON SOME DRAWINGS THAT SHE HAD MADE OF FLOWERS IN THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA

FAIR Lady! can I sing of flowers
That in Madeira bloom and fade,
I who ne'er sate within their bowers,
Nor through their sunny lawns have strayed?

How they in sprightly dance are worn
By Shepherd-groom or May-day queen,
Or holy festal pomps adorn,
These eyes have never seen.

Yet tho' to me the pencil's art
No like remembrances can give,
Your portraits still may reach the heart
And there for gentle pleasure live;
While Fancy ranging with free scope
Shall on some lovely Alien set
A name with us endeared to hope,
To peace, or fond regret.

Still as we look with nicer care,
Some new resemblance we may trace:
A *Heart's-ease* will perhaps be there,
A *Speedwell* may not want its place.
And so may we, with charmèd mind
Beholding what your skill has wrought,
Another *Star-of-Bethlehem* find,
A new *Forget-me-not.*

From earth to heaven with motion fleet
From heaven to earth our thoughts will pass,
A *Holy-thistle* here we meet
And there a *Shepherd's weather-glass*;
And haply some familiar name
Shall grace the fairest, sweetest, plant
Whose presence cheers the drooping frame
Of English Emigrant.

Gazing she feels its power beguile
Sad thoughts, and breathes with easier breath;
Alas! that meek, that tender smile
Is but a harbinger of death:
And pointing with a feeble hand
She says, in faint words by sighs broken,
Bear for me to my native land
This precious Flower, true love's last token.

Published 1845

XX

GLAD sight wherever new with old
Is joined through some dear homeborn tie;
The life of all that we behold
Depends upon that mystery.

Vain is the glory of the sky,
The beauty vain of field and grove,
Unless, while with admiring eye
We gaze, we also learn to love.

1842

XXI

THE CONTRAST

THE PARROT AND THE WREN

I

WITHIN her gilded cage confined
I saw a dazzling Belle,
A Parrot of that famous kind
Whose name is NON-PAREIL.

Like beads of glossy jet her eyes;
And, smoothed by Nature's skill,
With pearl or gleaming agate vies
Her finely-curvèd bill.

Her plumy mantle's living hues,
In mass opposed to mass,
Outshine the splendour that imbues
The robes of pictured glass.

And, sooth to say, an apter Mate
Did never tempt the choice
Of feathered Thing most delicate
In figure and in voice.

But, exiled from Australian bowers,
And singleness her lot,
She trills her song with tutored powers,
Or mocks each casual note.

No more of pity for regrets
With which she may have striven!
Now but in wantonness she frets,
Or spite, if cause be given;

Arch, volatile, a sportive bird
By social glee inspired;
Ambitious to be seen or heard,
And pleased to be admired!

II

This moss-lined shed, green, soft, and dry,
Harbours a self-contented Wren,
Not shunning man's abode, though shy,
Almost as thought itself, of human ken.

Strange places, coverts unendeared,
She never tried; the very nest,
In which this Child of Spring was reared,
Is warmed, thro' winter, by her feathery breast.

To the bleak winds she sometimes gives
A slender unexpected strain;
Proof that the hermitess still lives,
Though she appear not, and be sought in vain.

Say, Dora! tell me, by yon placid moon,
If called to choose between the favoured pair,
Which would you be,—the bird of the saloon,
By lady-fingers tended with nice care,
Caressed, applauded, upon dainties fed,
Or Nature's Darkling of this mossy shed?

1825

XXII

THE DANISH BOY

A FRAGMENT

I

BETWEEN two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.
And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a lonely hut;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish Boy.

II

In clouds above the lark is heard,
But drops not here to earth for rest;
Within this lonesome nook the bird
Did never build her nest.

No beast, no bird, hath here his home;
Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers:—to other dells
Their burthens do they bear;
The Danish Boy walks here alone:
The lovely dell is all his own.

III

A Spirit of noon-day is he;
Yet seems a form of flesh and blood;
Nor piping shepherd shall he be,
Nor herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing;
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew;
But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
As budding pines in spring;
His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

IV

A harp is from his shoulder slung;
Resting the harp upon his knee,
To words of a forgotten tongue
He suits its melody.
Of flocks upon the neighbouring hill
He is the darling and the joy;
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain-ponies prick their ears,
—They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sings alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

V

There sits he; in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove:
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far;
And yet he warbles songs of war,
That seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

1799

XXIII

SONG

FOR THE WANDERING JEW

THOUGH the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.

Clouds that love through air to hasten,
Ere the storm its fury stills,
Helmet-like themselves will fasten
On the heads of towering hills.

What, if through the frozen centre
Of the Alps the Chamois bound,
Yet he has a home to enter
In some nook of chosen ground:

And the Sea-horse, though the ocean
Yield him no domestic cave,
Slumbers without sense of motion,
Couched upon the rocking wave.

If on windy days the Raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less she loves her haven
In the bosom of the cliff.

The fleet Ostrich, till day closes,
Vagrant over desert sands,
Brooding on her eggs reposes
When chill night that care demands.

Day and night my toils redouble,
Never nearer to the goal;
Night and day, I feel the trouble
Of the Wanderer in my soul.

1800

XXIV

STRAY PLEASURES

'——*Pleasure is spread through the earth*
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find.'

BY their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold yon Prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames!
The platform is small, but gives room for them all;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,
To their house and their mill tethered fast:
To the small wooden isle where, their work to beguile,
They from morning to even take whatever is given;—
And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,—there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

Man and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the reel,
And their music 's a prey which they seize;
It plays not for them,—what matter? 'tis theirs;
And if they had care, it has scattered their cares
While they dance, crying, 'Long as ye please!'

They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee!
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the spring
Rouse the birds, and they sing;
If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,
Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss;
Each wave, one and t' other, speeds after his brother;
They are happy, for that is their right!

1806

XXV

THE PILGRIM'S DREAM

OR, THE STAR AND THE GLOW-WORM

A PILGRIM, when the summer-day
Had closed upon his weary way,
A lodging begged beneath a castle's roof;
But him the haughty Warder spurned;
And from the gate the Pilgrim turned,
To seek such covert as the field
Or heath-besprinkled copse might yield,
Or lofty wood, shower-proof.

He paced along; and, pensively,
Halting beneath a shady tree,
Whose moss-grown root might serve for couch or seat,
Fixed on a Star his upward eye;
Then from the tenant of the sky
He turned, and watched with kindred look
A Glow-worm, in a dusky nook,
Apparent at his feet.

The murmur of a neighbouring stream
Induced a soft and slumbrous dream,
A pregnant dream, within whose shadowy bounds
He recognised the earth-born Star,
And *That* which glittered from afar;
And (strange to witness!) from the frame
Of the ethereal Orb there came
Intelligible sounds.

Much did it taunt the humble Light
That now, when day was fled, and night
Hushed the dark earth, fast closing weary eyes,
A very reptile could presume
To show her taper in the gloom,
As if in rivalship with One
Who sate a ruler on his throne
Erected in the skies.

'Exalted Star!' the Worm replied,
'Abate this unbecoming pride,
Or with a less uneasy lustre shine;
Thou shrink'st as momently thy rays
Are mastered by the breathing haze;
While neither mist, nor thickest cloud
That shapes in heaven its murky shroud,
Hath power to injure mine.

'But not for this do I aspire
To match the spark of local fire,
That at my will burns on the dewy lawn,
With thy acknowledged glories;—No!
Yet, thus upbraided, I may show
What favours do attend me here,
Till, like thyself, I disappear
Before the purple dawn.'

When this in modest guise was said,
Across the welkin seemed to spread
A boding sound—for aught but sleep unfit!
Hills quaked, the rivers backward ran;
That Star, so proud of late, looked wan;
And reeled with visionary stir
In the blue depth, like Lucifer
Cast headlong to the pit!

Fire raged: and, when the spangled floor
Of ancient ether was no more,
New heavens succeeded, by the dream brought forth:
And all the happy Souls that rode
Transfigured through that fresh abode
Had heretofore, in humble trust,
Shone meekly 'mid their native dust,
The Glow-worms of the earth!

This knowledge, from an Angel's voice
Proceeding, made the heart rejoice
Of Him who slept upon the open lea:
Waking at morn he murmured not;
And, till life's journey closed, the spot
Was to the Pilgrim's soul endeared,
Where by that dream he had been cheered
Beneath the shady tree.

1818

XXVI

THE POET AND THE CAGED TURTLEDOVE

AS often as I murmur here
My half-formed melodies,
Straight from her osier mansion near
The Turtledove replies:
Though silent as a leaf before,
The captive promptly coos;
Is it to teach her own soft lore,
Or second my weak Muse?

I rather think the gentle Dove
Is murmuring a reproof,
Displeased that I from lays of love
Have dared to keep aloof;

That I, a Bard of hill and dale,
Have carolled, fancy free,
As if nor dove nor nightingale
Had heart or voice for me.

If such thy meaning, O forbear,
Sweet Bird! to do me wrong;
Love, blessed Love, is everywhere
The spirit of my song:
'Mid grove, and by the calm fireside,
Love animates my lyre—
That coo again!—'tis not to chide,
I feel, but to inspire.

1830

XXVII

A WREN'S NEST

AMONG the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.

No door the tenement requires,
And seldom needs a laboured roof;
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious, and storm-proof:

So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim,
That to the Kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.

These find, 'mid ivied abbey-walls,
A canopy in some still nook;
Others are pent-housed by a brae
That overhangs a brook.

There to the brooding bird her mate
Warbles by fits his low clear song;
And by the busy streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.

Or in sequestered lanes they build,
Where, till the flitting bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.

But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best;
And, among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest;

This, one of those small builders proved
In a green covert, where, from out
The forehead of a pollard oak,
The leafy antlers sprout;

For She who planned the mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a Primrose looked for aid
Her wishes to fulfil.

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
And fixed an infant's span above
The budding flowers, peeped forth the nest
The prettiest of the grove!

The treasure proudly did I show
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things; but once
Looked up for it in vain:

'Tis gone—a ruthless spoiler's prey,
Who heeds not beauty, love, or song,
'Tis gone! (so seemed it) and we grieved
Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth;
And felt that all was well.

The Primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple flower deceives.

Concealed from friends who might disturb
Thy quiet with no ill intent,
Secure from evil eyes and hands
On barbarous plunder bent,

Rest, Mother-bird! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian Flower,
And empty thy late home,

Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove
Housed near the growing Primrose-tuft
In foresight, or in love.

1833

XXVIII

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

YOU call it, 'Love lies bleeding,'—so you may,
Though the red Flower, not prostrate, only droops,
As we have seen it here from day to day,
From month to month, life passing not away:
A flower how rich in sadness! Even thus stoops,
(Sentient by Grecian sculpture's marvellous power),
Thus leans, with hanging brow and body bent
Earthward in uncomplaining languishment,
The dying Gladiator. So, sad Flower!
('Tis Fancy guides me willing to be led,
Though by a slender thread),
So drooped Adonis, bathed in sanguine dew
Of his death-wound, when he from innocent air
The gentlest breath of resignation drew;
While Venus in a passion of despair
Rent, weeping over him, her golden hair
Spangled with drops of that celestial shower.
She suffered, as Immortals sometimes do;
But pangs more lasting far *that* Lover knew
Who first, weighed down by scorn, in some lone bower
Did press this semblance of unpitied smart
Into the service of his constant heart,
His own dejection, downcast Flower! could share
With thine, and gave the mournful name which thou wilt ever bear.

Published 1842

XXIX

COMPANION TO THE FOREGOING

NEVER enlivened with the liveliest ray
That fosters growth or checks or cheers decay,
Nor by the heaviest rain-drops more deprest,
This Flower, that first appeared as summer's guest,
Preserves her beauty 'mid autumnal leaves,
And to her mournful habits fondly cleaves.
When files of stateliest plants have ceased to bloom,
One after one submitting to their doom,
When her coevals each and all are fled,
What keeps her thus reclined upon her lonesome bed?

The old mythologists, more impressed than we
Of this late day by character in tree
Or herb that claimed peculiar sympathy,
Or by the silent lapse of fountain clear,
Or with the language of the viewless air
By bird or beast made vocal, sought a cause
To solve the mystery, not in Nature's laws
But in Man's fortunes. Hence a thousand tales
Sung to the plaintive lyre in Grecian vales.
Nor doubt that something of their spirit swayed
The fancy-stricken Youth or heart-sick Maid,
Who, while each stood companionless and eyed
This undeparting Flower in crimson dyed,
Thought of a wound which death is slow to cure,
A fate that has endured and will endure,
And, patience coveting yet passion feeding,
Called the dejected Lingerer, *Love lies Bleeding.*

Published 1842

XXX

RURAL ILLUSIONS

SYLPH was it? or a Bird more bright
Than those of fabulous stock?
A second darted by;—and lo!
Another of the flock,
Through sunshine flitting from the bough
To nestle in the rock.
Transient deception! a gay freak
Of April's mimicries!
Those brilliant strangers, hailed with joy
Among the budding trees,
Proved last year's leaves, pushed from the spray
To frolic on the breeze.

Maternal Flora! show thy face,
And let thy hand be seen,
Thy hand here sprinkling tiny flowers,
That, as they touch the green,
Take root (so seems it) and look up
In honour of their Queen.
Yet, sooth, those little starry specks,
That not in vain aspired
To be confounded with live growths,
Most dainty, most admired,
Were only blossoms dropped from twigs
Of their own offspring tired.

Not such the World's illusive shows;
Her wingless flutterings,
Her blossoms which, though shed, outbrave
The floweret as it springs,
For the undeceived, smile as they may,
Are melancholy things:
But gentle Nature plays her part
With ever-varying wiles,
And transient feignings with plain truth
So well she reconciles,
That those fond Idlers most are pleased
Whom oftenest she beguiles.

1832

XXXI

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES

THAT way look, my Infant, lo!
What a pretty baby-show!
See the Kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves—one—two—and three—
From the lofty elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly: one might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or Faery hither tending,—
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In his wavering parachute.

——But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow,
Just as light and just as yellow;
There are many now—now one—
Now they stop and there are none:
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap half-way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again:
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
What would little Tabby care
For the plaudits of the crowd?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure!

'Tis a pretty baby-treat;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet;
Here, for neither Babe nor me,
Other playmate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings
(In the sun or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings,
Made this orchard's narrow space,
And this vale, so blithe a place;
Multitudes are swept away
Never more to breathe the day:
Some are sleeping; some in bands
Travelled into distant lands;
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighbourhood;
And among the Kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.

Where is he that giddy Sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colours bright,
Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree;
Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out;
Hung—head pointing towards the ground—
Fluttered, perched, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound;
Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin!
Prettiest tumbler ever seen!
Light of heart and light of limb;
What is now become of Him?
Lambs, that through the mountains went
Frisking, bleating merriment,
When the year was in its prime,
They are sobered by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighbouring rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound.
Vainly glitter hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain;
Vainly Morning spreads the lure
Of a sky serene and pure;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy:
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter even than gaiety?

Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which Nature
Furnishes to every creature;
Whatsoe'er we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show,
Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten! from thy freaks,—
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Dora's face;
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,

That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair!
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladsomeness.
—Pleased by any random toy;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

1804

XXXII

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER, DORA

ON BEING REMINDED THAT SHE WAS A MONTH OLD THAT DAY, SEPTEMBER 16

—— Hast thou then survived—
Mild Offspring of infirm humanity,
Meek Infant! among all forlornest things
The most forlorn—one life of that bright star,
The second glory of the Heavens?—Thou hast;
Already hast survived that great decay,
That transformation through the wide earth felt,
And by all nations. In that Being's sight
From whom the Race of human kind proceed,
A thousand years are but as yesterday;
And one day's narrow circuit is to Him
Not less capacious than a thousand years.
But what is time? What outward glory? neither
A measure is of Thee, whose claims extend
Through 'heaven's eternal year.'—Yet hail to Thee,
Frail, feeble, Monthling!—by that name, methinks,
Thy scanty breathing-time is portioned out
Not idly.—Hadst thou been of Indian birth,
Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves,

And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,
Or to the churlish elements exposed
On the blank plains,—the coldness of the night,
Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face
Of beauty, by the changing moon adorned,
Would, with imperious admonition, then
Have scored thine age, and punctually timed
Thine infant history, on the minds of those
Who might have wandered with thee.—Mother's love,
Nor less than mother's love in other breasts,
Will, among us warm-clad and warmly housed,
Do for thee what the finger of the heavens
Doth all too often harshly execute
For thy unblest coevals, amid wilds
Where fancy hath small liberty to grace
The affections, to exalt them or refine;
And the maternal sympathy itself,
Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless tie
Of naked instinct, wound about the heart.
Happier, far happier is thy lot and ours!
Even now—to solemnise thy helpless state,
And to enliven in the mind's regard
Thy passive beauty—parallels have risen,
Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect,
Within the region of a father's thoughts,
Thee and thy mate and sister of the sky.
And first;—thy sinless progress, through a world
By sorrow darkened and by care disturbed,
Apt likeness bears to hers, through gathered clouds
Moving untouched in silver purity,
And cheering oft-times their reluctant gloom.
Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain:
But thou, how leisurely thou fill'st thy horn
With brightness! leaving her to post along,
And range about, disquieted in change,
And still impatient of the shape she wears.
Once up, once down the hill, one journey, Babe,
That will suffice thee; and it seems that now
Thou hast foreknowledge that such task is thine;
Thou travellest so contentedly, and sleep'st
In such a heedless peace. Alas! full soon
Hath this conception, grateful to behold,
Changed countenance, like an object sullied o'er
By breathing mist; and thine appears to be
A mournful labour, while to her is given
Hope, and a renovation without end.
—That smile forbids the thought; for on thy face

Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn,
To shoot and circulate; smiles have there been seen;
Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports
The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
Thy loneliness: or shall those smiles be called
Feelers of love, put forth as if to explore
This untried world, and to prepare thy way
Through a strait passage intricate and dim?
Such are they; and the same are tokens, signs,
Which, when the appointed season hath arrived,
Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt;
And Reason's godlike Power be proud to own.

1804

XXXIII

THE WAGGONER

'In Cairo's crowded streets
The impatient Merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
And Mecca saddens at the long delay.'

THOMSON.

TO CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—When I sent you, a few weeks ago, the Tale of Peter Bell, you asked 'why THE WAGGONER was not added?'—To say the truth,—from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended this little Piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, THE WAGGONER was read to you in manuscript, and, as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope, that, since the localities on which the Poem partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being therefore in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you; in acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your Writings, and of the high esteem with which

I am very truly yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *May* 20, 1819.

CANTO FIRST

'TIS spent—this burning day of June!
Soft darkness o'er its latest gleams is stealing;
The buzzing dor-hawk, round and round, is wheeling,—
That solitary bird
Is all that can be heard
In silence deeper far than that of deepest noon!

Confiding Glow-worms, 'tis a night
Propitious to your earth-born light!
But where the scattered stars are seen
In hazy straits the clouds between,

Each, in his station twinkling not,
Seems changed into a pallid spot.
The mountains against heaven's grave weight
Rise up, and grow to wondrous height.
The air, as in a lion's den,
Is close and hot;—and now and then
Comes a tired and sultry breeze
With a haunting and a panting,
Like the stifling of disease;
But the dews allay the heat,
And the silence makes it sweet.

Hush, there is some one on the stir!
'Tis Benjamin the Waggoner;
Who long hath trod this toilsome way,
Companion of the night and day.
That far-off tinkling's drowsy cheer,
Mixed with a faint yet grating sound
In a moment lost and found,
The Wain announces—by whose side
Along the banks of Rydal Mere
He paces on, a trusty Guide,—
Listen! you can scarcely hear!
Hither he his course is bending;—
Now he leaves the lower ground,
And up the craggy hill ascending
Many a stop and stay he makes,
Many a breathing-fit he takes;—
Steep the way and wearisome,
Yet all the while his whip is dumb!

The Horses have worked with right good-will,
And so have gained the top of the hill;
He was patient, they were strong,
And now they smoothly glide along,
Recovering breath, and pleased to win
The praises of mild Benjamin.
Heaven shield him from mishap and snare!
But why so early with this prayer?
Is it for threatenings in the sky?
Or for some other danger nigh?
No; none is near him yet, though he
Be one of much infirmity;
For at the bottom of the brow,
Where once the Dove and Olive-bough
Offered a greeting of good ale
To all who entered Grasmere Vale;

And called on him who must depart
To leave it with a jovial heart;
There, where the Dove and Olive-bough
Once hung, a Poet harbours now,
A simple water-drinking Bard;
Why need our Hero then (though frail
His best resolves) be on his guard?
He marches by, secure and bold;
Yet, while he thinks on times of old,
It seems that all looks wondrous cold;
He shrugs his shoulders, shakes his head,
And, for the honest folk within,
It is a doubt with Benjamin
Whether they be alive or dead!

Here is no danger,—none at all!
Beyond his wish he walks secure;
But pass a mile—and *then* for trial,—
Then for the pride of self-denial;
If he resist that tempting door,
Which with such friendly voice will call;
If he resist those casement panes,
And that bright gleam which thence will fall
Upon his Leaders' bells and manes,
Inviting him with cheerful lure:
For still, though all be dark elsewhere,
Some shining notice will be *there*,
Of open house and ready fare.

The place to Benjamin right well
Is known, and by as strong a spell
As used to be that sign of love
And hope—the Olive-bough and Dove;
He knows it to his cost, good Man!
Who does not know the famous Swan?
Object uncouth! and yet our boast,
For it was painted by the Host;
His own conceit the figure planned,
'Twas coloured all by his own hand;
And that frail Child of thirsty clay,
Of whom I sing this rustic lay,
Could tell with self-dissatisfaction
Quaint stories of the bird's attraction![1]

Well! that is past—and in despite
Of open door and shining light.

[1] This rude piece of self-taught art (such is the progress of refinement) has been supplanted by a professional production.

And now the conqueror essays
The long ascent of Dunmail-raise;
And with his team is gentle here
As when he clomb from Rydal Mere;
His whip they do not dread—his voice
They only hear it to rejoice.
To stand or go is at *their* pleasure;
Their efforts and their time they measure
By generous pride within the breast;
And while they strain, and while they rest,
He thus pursues his thoughts at leisure.

Now am I fairly safe to-night—
And with proud cause my heart is light:
I trespassed lately worse than ever—
But Heaven has blest a good endeavour;
And, to my soul's content, I find
The evil One is left behind.
Yes, let my master fume and fret,
Here am I—with my horses yet!
My jolly team, he finds that ye
Will work for nobody but me!
Full proof of this the Country gained;
It knows how ye were vexed and strained,
And forced unworthy stripes to bear,
When trusted to another's care.
Here was it—on this rugged slope,
Which now ye climb with heart and hope,
I saw you, between rage and fear,
Plunge, and fling back a spiteful ear,
And ever more and more confused,
As ye were more and more abused:
As chance would have it, passing by
I saw you in that jeopardy:
A word from me was like a charm;
Ye pulled together with one mind;
And your huge burthen, safe from harm,
Moved like a vessel in the wind!
—Yes, without me, up hills so high
'Tis vain to strive for mastery.
Then grieve not, jolly team! though tough
The road we travel, steep, and rough;
Though Rydal-heights and Dunmail-raise,
And all their fellow banks and braes,
Full often make you stretch and strain,
And halt for breath and halt again,

Yet to their sturdiness 'tis owing
That side by side we still are going!

While Benjamin in earnest mood
His meditations thus pursued,
A storm, which had been smothered long,
Was growing inwardly more strong;
And, in its struggles to get free,
Was busily employed as he.
The thunder had begun to growl—
He heard not, too intent of soul;
The air was now without a breath—
He marked not that 'twas still as death.
But soon large rain-drops on his head
Fell with the weight of drops of lead;—
He starts—and takes, at the admonition,
A sage survey of his condition.
The road is black before his eyes,
Glimmering faintly where it lies;
Black is the sky—and every hill,
Up to the sky, is blacker still—
Sky, hill, and dale, one dismal room,
Hung round and overhung with gloom;
Save that above a single height
Is to be seen a lurid light,
Above Helm-crag[1]—a streak half dead,
A burning of portentous red;
And near that lurid light, full well
The Astrologer, sage Sidrophel,
Where at his desk and book he sits,
Puzzling aloft his curious wits;
He whose domain is held in common
With no one but the ancient woman,
Cowering beside her rifted cell,
As if intent on magic spell;—
Dread pair, that, spite of wind and weather,
Still sit upon Helm-crag together!

The Astrologer was not unseen
By solitary Benjamin;
But total darkness came anon,
And he and every thing was gone:
And suddenly a ruffling breeze,
(That would have rocked the sounding trees

[1] A mountain of Grasmere, the broken summit of which presents two figures, full as distinctly shaped as that of the famous Cobbler near Arroquhar in Scotland.

Had aught of sylvan growth been there)
Swept through the Hollow long and bare:
The rain rushed down—the road was battered,
As with the force of billows shattered;
The horses are dismayed, nor know
Whether they should stand or go;
And Benjamin is groping near them,
Sees nothing, and can scarcely hear them.
He is astounded,—wonder not,—
With such a charge in such a spot;
Astounded in the mountain gap
With thunder-peals, clap after clap,
Close-treading on the silent flashes—
And somewhere, as he thinks, by crashes
Among the rocks; with weight of rain,
And sullen motions long and slow,
That to a dreary distance go—
Till, breaking in upon the dying strain,
A rending o'er his head begins the fray again.

Meanwhile, uncertain what to do,
And oftentimes compelled to halt,
The horses cautiously pursue
Their way, without mishap or fault;
And now have reached that pile of stones,
Heaped over brave King Dunmail's bones,
He who had once supreme command,
Last king of rocky Cumberland;
His bones, and those of all his Power,
Slain here in a disastrous hour!

When, passing through this narrow strait,
Stony, and dark, and desolate,
Benjamin can faintly hear
A voice that comes from some one near,
A female voice:—'Whoe'er you be,
Stop,' it exclaimed, 'and pity me!'
And, less in pity than in wonder,
Amid the darkness and the thunder,
The Waggoner, with prompt command,
Summons his horses to a stand.

While, with increasing agitation,
The Woman urged her supplication,
In rueful words, with sobs between—
The voice of tears that fell unseen;

There came a flash—a startling glare,
And all Seat-Sandal was laid bare!
'Tis not a time for nice suggestion,
And Benjamin, without a question,
Taking her for some way-worn rover,
Said, 'Mount, and get you under cover!'

Another voice, in tone as hoarse
As a swoln brook with rugged course,
Cried out, 'Good brother, why so fast?
I've had a glimpse of you—*avast*!
Or, since it suits you to be civil,
Take her at once—for good and evil!'

'It is my Husband,' softly said
The Woman, as if half afraid:
By this time she was snug within,
Through help of honest Benjamin;
She and her Babe, which to her breast
With thankfulness the Mother pressed;
And now the same strong voice more near
Said cordially, 'My Friend, what cheer?
Rough doings these! as God 's my judge,
The sky owes somebody a grudge!
We've had in half an hour or less
A twelvemonth's terror and distress!'

Then Benjamin entreats the Man
Would mount, too, quickly as he can:
The Sailor—Sailor now no more,
But such he had been heretofore—
To courteous Benjamin replied,
'Go you your way, and mind not me;
For I must have, whate'er betide,
My Ass and fifty things beside,—
Go, and I'll follow speedily!'

The Waggon moves—and with its load
Descends along the sloping road;
And the rough Sailor instantly
Turns to a little tent hard by:
For when, at closing-in of day,
The family had come that way,
Green pasture and the soft warm air
Tempted them to settle there.—
Green is the grass for beast to graze,
Around the stones of Dunmail-raise!

The Sailor gathers up his bed,
Takes down the canvas overhead;
And after farewell to the place,
A parting word—though not of grace,
Pursues, with Ass and all his store,
The way the Waggon went before.

Canto Second

If Wytheburn's modest House of prayer,
As lowly as the lowliest dwelling,
Had, with its belfry's humble stock,
A little pair that hang in air,
Been mistress also of a clock,
(And one, too, not in crazy plight),
Twelve strokes that clock would have been telling
Under the brow of old Helvellyn—
Its bead-roll of midnight,
Then, when the Hero of my tale
Was passing by, and, down the vale
(The vale now silent, hushed, I ween,
As if a storm had never been)
Proceeding with a mind at ease;
While the old Familiar of the seas,
Intent to use his utmost haste,
Gained ground upon the Waggon fast,
And gives another lusty cheer;
For, spite of rumbling of the wheels,
A welcome greeting he can hear;—
It is a fiddle in its glee
Dinning from the Cherry Tree!

Thence the sound—the light is there—
As Benjamin is now aware,
Who, to his inward thoughts confined,
Had almost reached the festive door,
When, startled by the Sailor's roar,
He hears a sound and sees the light,
And in a moment calls to mind
That 'tis the village Merry-night![1]

Although before in no dejection,
At this insidious recollection
His heart with sudden joy is filled,—
His ears are by the music thrilled,

[1] A term well known in the North of England, and applied to rural Festivals where young persons meet in the evening for the purpose of dancing.

His eyes take pleasure in the road
Glittering before him bright and broad;
And Benjamin is wet and cold,
And there are reasons manifold
That make the good, tow'rds which he 's yearning,
Look fairly like a lawful earning.

Nor has thought time to come and go,
To vibrate between yes and no;
For, cries the Sailor, 'Glorious chance
That blew us hither!—let him dance,
Who can or will!—my honest soul,
Our treat shall be a friendly bowl!'
He draws him to the door—'Come in,
Come, come,' cries he to Benjamin!
And Benjamin—ah, woe is me!
Gave the word—the horses heard
And halted, though reluctantly.

'Blithe souls and lightsome hearts have we,
Feasting at the CHERRY TREE!'
This was the outside proclamation,
This was the inside salutation;
What bustling—jostling—high and low!
A universal overflow!
What tankards foaming from the tap!
What store of cakes in every lap!
What thumping—stumping—overhead!
The thunder had not been more busy:
With such a stir you would have said,
This little place may well be dizzy!
'Tis who can dance with greatest vigour—
'Tis what can be most prompt and eager;
As if it heard the fiddle's call,
The pewter clatters on the wall;
The very bacon shows its feeling,
Swinging from the smoky ceiling!

A steaming bowl, a blazing fire,
What greater good can heart desire?
'Twere worth a wise man's while to try
The utmost anger of the sky:
To *seek* for thoughts of a gloomy cast,
If such the bright amends at last.
Now should you say I judge amiss,
The CHERRY TREE shows proof of this;

For soon, of all the happy there,
Our Travellers are the happiest pair;
All care with Benjamin is gone—
A Cæsar past the Rubicon!
He thinks not of his long, long, strife;—
The Sailor, Man by nature gay,
Hath no resolves to throw away;
And he hath now forgot his Wife,
Hath quite forgotten her—or may be
Thinks her the luckiest soul on earth,
Within that warm and peaceful berth,
Under cover,
Terror over,
Sleeping by her sleeping Baby.

With bowl that sped from hand to hand,
The gladdest of the gladsome band,
Amid their own delight and fun,
They hear—when every dance is done,
When every whirling bout is o'er—
The fiddle's *squeak*[1]—that call to bliss,
Ever followed by a kiss;
They envy not the happy lot,
But enjoy their own the more!

While thus our jocund Travellers fare,
Up springs the Sailor from his chair—
Limps (for I might have told before
That he was lame) across the floor—
Is gone—returns—and with a prize;
With what?—a Ship of lusty size;
A gallant stately Man-of-war,
Fixed on a smoothly-sliding car.
Surprise to all, but most surprise
To Benjamin, who rubs his eyes,
Not knowing that he had befriended
A Man so gloriously attended!

'This,' cries the Sailor, 'a Third-rate is—
Stand back, and you shall see her gratis!
This was the Flag-ship at the Nile,
The VANGUARD—you may smirk and smile,
But, pretty Maid, if you look near,
You 'll find you 've much in little here!

[1] At the close of each strathspey, or jig, a particular note from the fiddle summons the Rustic to the agreeable duty of saluting his partner.

A nobler ship did never swim,
And you shall see her in full trim:
I 'll set, my friends, to do you honour,
Set every inch of sail upon her.'
So said, so done; and masts, sails, yards,
He names them all; and interlards
His speech with uncouth terms of art,
Accomplished in the showman's part;
And then, as from a sudden check,
Cries out—''Tis there, the quarter-deck
On which brave Admiral Nelson stood—
A sight that would have roused your blood!
One eye he had, which, bright as ten,
Burned like a fire among his men;
Let this be land, and that be sea,
Here lay the French—and *thus* came we!'

Hushed was by this the fiddle's sound,
The dancers all were gathered round,
And such the stillness of the house,
You might have heard a nibbling mouse;
While, borrowing helps where'er he may,
The Sailor through the story runs
Of ships to ships and guns to guns;
And does his utmost to display
The dismal conflict, and the might
And terror of that marvellous night!
'A bowl, a bowl of double measure,'
Cries Benjamin, 'a draught of length,
To Nelson, England's pride and treasure,
Her bulwark and her tower of strength!'
When Benjamin had seized the bowl,
The mastiff, from beneath the waggon,
Where he lay, watchful as a dragon,
Rattled his chain;—'twas all in vain,
For Benjamin, triumphant soul!
He heard the monitory growl;
Heard—and in opposition quaffed
A deep, determined, desperate draught!
Nor did the battered Tar forget,
Or flinch from what he deemed his debt:
Then, like a hero crowned with laurel,
Back to her place the ship he led;
Wheeled her back in full apparel;
And so, flag flying at mast-head,
Re-yoked her to the Ass:—anon
Cries Benjamin, 'We must be gone.'

Thus, after two hours' hearty stay,
Again behold them on their way!

Canto Third

Right gladly had the horses stirred,
When they the wished-for greeting heard,
The whip's loud notice from the door,
That they were free to move once more.
You think, those doings must have bred
In them disheartening doubts and dread;
No, not a horse of all the eight,
Although it be a moonless night,
Fears either for himself or freight;
For this they know (and let it hide,
In part, the offences of their guide)
That Benjamin, with clouded brains,
Is worth the best with all their pains;
And, if they had a prayer to make,
The prayer would be that they may take
With him whatever comes in course,
The better fortune or the worse;
That no one else may have business near them,
And, drunk or sober, he may steer them.

So forth in dauntless mood they fare,
And with them goes the guardian pair.

Now, heroes, for the true commotion,
The triumph of your late devotion!
Can aught on earth impede delight,
Still mounting to a higher height;
And higher still—a greedy flight!
Can any low-born care pursue her,
Can any mortal clog come to her?
No notion have they—not a thought,
That is from joyless regions brought!
And, while they coast the silent lake,
Their inspiration I partake;
Share their empyreal spirits—yea,
With their enraptured vision see—
O fancy—what a jubilee!
What shifting pictures—clad in gleams
Of colour bright as feverish dreams!
Earth, spangled sky, and lake serene,
Involved and restless all—a scene
Pregnant with mutual exaltation,
Rich change, and multiplied creation!

This sight to me the Muse imparts;—
And then, what kindness in their hearts!
What tears of rapture, what vow-making,
Profound entreaties, and hand-shaking!
What solemn, vacant, interlacing,
As if they 'd fall asleep embracing!
Then, in the turbulence of glee,
And in the excess of amity,
Says Benjamin, 'That Ass of thine,
He spoils thy sport, and hinders mine:
If he were tethered to the waggon,
He 'd drag as well what he is dragging;
And we, as brother should with brother,
Might trudge it alongside each other!'

Forthwith, obedient to command,
The horses made a quiet stand;
And to the waggon's skirts was tied
The Creature, by the Mastiff's side,
The Mastiff wondering, and perplext
With dread of what will happen next;
And thinking it but sorry cheer
To have such company so near!

This new arrangement made, the Wain
Through the still night proceeds again;
No Moon hath risen her light to lend;
But indistinctly may be kenned
The VANGUARD, following close behind,
Sails spread, as if to catch the wind!

'Thy wife and child are snug and warm,
Thy ship will travel without harm;
I like,' said Benjamin, 'her shape and stature:
And this of mine—this bulky creature
Of which I have the steering—this,
Seen fairly, is not much amiss!
We want your streamers, friend, you know;
But, altogether as we go,
We make a kind of handsome show!
Among these hills, from first to last,
We 've weathered many a furious blast;
Hard passage forcing on, with head
Against the storm, and canvas spread.
I hate a boaster; but to thee
Will say 't, who know'st both land and sea,
The unluckiest hulk that stems the brine
Is hardly worse beset than mine,

When cross-winds on her quarter beat;
And, fairly lifted from my feet,
I stagger onward—heaven knows how;
But not so pleasantly as now:
Poor pilot I, by snows confounded,
And many a foundrous pit surrounded!
Yet here we are, by night and day
Grinding through rough and smooth our way;
Through foul and fair our task fulfilling;
And long shall be so yet—God willing!'

'Ay,' said the Tar, 'through fair and foul—
But save us from yon screeching owl!'
That instant was begun a fray
Which called their thoughts another way:
The Mastiff, ill-conditioned carl!
What must he do but growl and snarl,
Still more and more dissatisfied
With the meek comrade at his side!
Till, not incensed though put to proof,
The Ass, uplifting a hind hoof,
Salutes the Mastiff on the head;
And so were better manners bred,
And all was calmed and quieted.

'Yon screech-owl,' says the Sailor, turning
Back to his former cause of mourning,
'Yon owl!—pray God that all be well!
'Tis worse than any funeral bell;
As sure as I 've the gift of sight,
We shall be meeting ghosts to-night!'
—Said Benjamin, 'This whip shall lay
A thousand, if they cross our way.
I know that Wanton's noisy station,
I know him and his occupation;
The jolly bird hath learned his cheer
Upon the banks of Windermere;
Where a tribe of them make merry,
Mocking the Man that keeps the ferry;
Hallooing from an open throat,
Like travellers shouting for a boat.
—The tricks he learned at Windermere
This vagrant owl is playing here—
That is the worst of his employment:
He 's at the top of his enjoyment!'

This explanation stilled the alarm,
Cured the foreboder like a charm;

This, and the manner, and the voice,
Summoned the Sailor to rejoice;
His heart is up—he fears no evil
From life or death, from man or devil;
He wheels—and, making many stops,
Brandished his crutch against the mountain tops;
And, while he talked of blows and scars,
Benjamin, among the stars,
Beheld a dancing—and a glancing;
Such retreating and advancing
As, I ween, was never seen
In bloodiest battle since the days of Mars!

Canto Fourth

Thus they, with freaks of proud delight,
Beguile the remnant of the night;
And many a snatch of jovial song
Regales them as they wind along;
While to the music, from on high,
The echoes make a glad reply.—
But the sage Muse the revel heeds
No farther than her story needs;
Nor will she servilely attend
The loitering journey to its end.
—Blithe spirits of her own impel
The Muse, who scents the morning air,
To take of this transported pair
A brief and unreproved farewell;
To quit the slow-paced waggon's side,
And wander down yon hawthorn dell,
With murmuring Greta for her guide.
—There doth she ken the awful form
Of Raven-crag—black as a storm—
Glimmering through the twilight pale;
And Ghimmer-crag,[1] his tall twin brother,
Each peering forth to meet the other:—
And, while she roves through St. John's Vale,
Along the smooth unpathwayed plain,
By sheep-track or through cottage lane,
Where no disturbance comes to intrude
Upon the pensive solitude,
Her unsuspecting eye, perchance,
With the rude shepherd's favoured glance,
Beholds the faeries in array,
Whose party-coloured garments gay
The silent company betray:

[1] The crag of the ewe lamb.

Red, green, and blue; a moment's sight!
For Skiddaw-top with rosy light
Is touched—and all the band take flight.
—Fly also, Muse! and from the dell
Mount to the ridge of Nathdale Fell;
Thence look thou forth o'er wood and lawn
Hoar with the frost-like dews of dawn;
Across yon meadowy bottom look,
Where close fogs hide their parent brook;
And see, beyond that hamlet small,
The ruined towers of Threlkeld-hall,
Lurking in a double shade,
By trees and lingering twilight made!
There, at Blencathara's rugged feet,
Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat
To noble Clifford; from annoy
Concealed the persecuted boy,
Well pleased in rustic garb to feed
His flock, and pipe on shepherd's reed
Among this multitude of hills,
Crags, woodlands, waterfalls, and rills;
Which soon the morning shall enfold,
From east to west, in ample vest
Of massy gloom and radiance bold.

The mists, that o'er the streamlet's bed
Hung low, begin to rise and spread;
Even while I speak, their skirts of grey
Are smitten by a silver ray;
And lo!—up Castrigg's naked steep
(Where, smoothly urged, the vapours sweep
Along—and scatter and divide,
Like fleecy clouds self-multiplied)
The stately waggon is ascending,
With faithful Benjamin attending,
Apparent now beside his team—
Now lost amid a glittering steam:
And with him goes his Sailor-friend,
By this time near their journey's end;
And, after their high-minded riot,
Sickening into thoughtful quiet;
As if the morning's pleasant hour
Had for their joys a killing power.
And, sooth, for Benjamin a vein
Is opened of still deeper pain,
As if his heart by notes were stung
From out the lowly hedge-rows flung;

As if the warbler lost in light
Reproved his soarings of the night,
In strains of rapture pure and holy
Upbraided his distempered folly.

Drooping is he, his step is dull;
But the horses stretch and pull;
With increasing vigour climb,
Eager to repair lost time;
Whether, by their own desert,
Knowing what cause there is for shame,
They are labouring to avert
As much as may be of the blame,
Which, they foresee, must soon alight
Upon *his* head, whom, in despite
Of all his failings, they love best;
Whether for him they are distrest;
Or, by length of fasting roused,
Are impatient to be housed:
Up against the hill they strain
Tugging at the iron chain,
Tugging all with might and main,
Last and foremost, every horse
To the utmost of his force!
And the smoke and respiration,
Rising like an exhalation,
Blend with the mist—a moving shroud
To form, an undissolving cloud;
Which, with slant ray, the merry sun
Takes delight to play upon.
Never golden-haired Apollo,
Pleased some favourite chief to follow
Through accidents of peace or war,
In a perilous moment threw
Around the object of his care
Veil of such celestial hue;
Interposed so bright a screen—
Him and his enemies between!

Alas! what boots it?—who can hide,
When the malicious Fates are bent
On working out an ill intent?
Can destiny be turned aside?
No—sad progress of my story!
Benjamin, this outward glory

Cannot shield thee from thy Master,
Who from Keswick has pricked forth,
Sour and surly as the north;
And, in fear of some disaster,
Comes to give what help he may,
And to hear what thou canst say;
If, as needs he must forbode,
Thou hast been loitering on the road!
His fears, his doubts, may now take flight—
The wished-for object is in sight;
Yet, trust the Muse, it rather hath
Stirred him up to livelier wrath;
Which he stifles, moody man!
With all the patience that he can;
To the end that, at your meeting,
He may give thee decent greeting.

There he is—resolved to stop,
Till the waggon gains the top;
But stop he cannot—must advance:
Him Benjamin, with lucky glance,
Espies—and instantly is ready,
Self-collected, poised, and steady:
And, to be the better seen,
Issues from his radiant shroud,
From his close-attending cloud,
With careless air and open mien.
Erect his port, and firm his going;
So struts yon cock that now is crowing;
And the morning light in grace
Strikes upon his lifted face,
Hurrying the pallid hue away
That might his trespasses betray.
But what can all avail to clear him,
Or what need of explanation,
Parley or interrogation?
For the Master sees, alas!
That unhappy Figure near him,
Limping o'er the dewy grass,
Where the road it fringes, sweet,
Soft and cool to way-worn feet;
And, O indignity! an Ass,
By his noble Mastiff's side,
Tethered to the waggon's tail:
And the ship, in all her pride,
Following after in full sail!

Not to speak of babe and mother;
Who, contented with each other,
And snug as birds in leafy arbour,
Find, within, a blessed harbour!

With eager eyes the Master pries;
Looks in and out, and through and through;
Says nothing—till at last he spies
A wound upon the Mastiff's head,
A wound where plainly might be read
What feats an Ass's hoof can do!
But drop the rest:—this aggravation,
This complicated provocation,
A hoard of grievances unsealed;
All past forgiveness it repealed;
And thus, and through distempered blood
On both sides, Benjamin the good,
The patient, and the tender-hearted,
Was from his team and waggon parted;
When duty of that day was o'er,
Laid down his whip—and served no more.—
Nor could the waggon long survive,
Which Benjamin had ceased to drive:
It lingered on;—guide after guide
Ambitiously the office tried;
But each unmanageable hill
Called for *his* patience and *his* skill;—
And sure it is, that through this night,
And what the morning brought to light,
Two losses had we to sustain,
We lost both WAGGONER and WAIN!

Accept, O Friend, for praise or blame,
The gift of this adventurous song;
A record which I dared to frame,
Though timid scruples checked me long;
They checked me—and I left the theme
Untouched;—in spite of many a gleam
Of fancy which thereon was shed,
Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still
Upon the side of a distant hill:
But Nature might not be gainsaid;
For what I have and what I miss
I sing of these;—it makes my bliss!

Nor is it I who play the part,
But a shy spirit in my heart,
That comes and goes—will sometimes leap
From hiding-places ten years deep;
Or haunts me with familiar face,
Returning, like a ghost unlaid,
Until the debt I owe be paid.
Forgive me, then; for I had been
On friendly terms with this Machine:
In him, while he was wont to trace
Our roads, through many a long year's space,
A living almanack had we;
We had a speaking diary,
That in this uneventful place,
Gave to the days a mark and name
By which we knew them when they came.
—Yes, I, and all about me here,
Through all the changes of the year,
Had seen him through the mountains go,
In pomp of mist or pomp of snow,
Majestically huge and slow:
Or with a milder grace adorning
The landscape of a summer's morning;
While Grasmere smoothed her liquid plain
The moving image to detain;
And mighty Fairfield, with a chime
Of echoes, to his march kept time;
When little other business stirred,
And little other sound was heard;
In that delicious hour of balm,
Stillness, solitude, and calm,
While yet the valley is arrayed,
On this side with a sober shade;
On that is prodigally bright—
Crag, lawn, and wood—with rosy light.
—But most of all, thou lordly Wain!
I wish to have thee here again,
When windows flap and chimney roars,
And all is dismal out of doors;
And, sitting by my fire, I see
Eight sorry carts, no less a train!
Unworthy successors of thee,
Come straggling through the wind and rain:
And oft, as they pass slowly on,
Beneath my windows, one by one,
See, perched upon the naked height
The summit of a cumbrous freight,

A single traveller—and there
Another; then perhaps a pair—
The lame, the sickly, and the old;
Men, women, heartless with the cold;
And babes in wet and starveling plight;
Which once, be weather as it might,
Had still a nest within a nest,
Thy shelter—and their mother's breast!
Then most of all, then far the most,
Do I regret what we have lost;
Am grieved for that unhappy sin
Which robbed us of good Benjamin;—
And of his stately Charge, which none
Could keep alive when He was gone!

1805

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

I

THERE WAS A BOY

THERE was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander! many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And through that churchyard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!

1798

II

TO THE CUCKOO

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

1802

III

A NIGHT-PIECE

——The sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground—from rock, plant, tree, or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent;—still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

1798

IV

AIREY-FORCE VALLEY

——Not a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
Are steadfast as the rocks; the brook itself,
Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are still and motionless.
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow

Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts.

Published 1842

YEW-TREES

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore:
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow;—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

1803

VI

NUTTING

——It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)

One of those heavenly days that cannot die;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame—
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,
More ragged than need was! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation; but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet;—or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And—with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep—
I heard the murmur, and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage: and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being: and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past;

Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

1799

VII

THE SIMPLON PASS

——Brook and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow step. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first and last, and midst, and without end.

Published 1845

VIII

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!

Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

1804

IX

O NIGHTINGALE! thou surely art
A creature of a 'fiery heart':
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come-at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed—and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the song—the song for me!

1807

X

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

'Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

'She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

'And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell.'

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!

She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

1799

XI

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

1799

XII

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

1804

XIII

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

AT the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes!

1797

XIV

POWER OF MUSIC

AN Orpheus! an Orpheus! yes, Faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old;—
Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same
In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

His station is there; and he works on the crowd,
He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim—
Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him?

What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest;
And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer opprest.

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,
So He, where he stands, is a centre of light;
It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-browed Jack,
And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste—
What matter! he's caught—and his time runs to waste;
The Newsman is stopped, though he stops on the fret;
And the half-breathless Lamplighter—he's in the net!

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her store;—
If a thief could be here he might pilfer at ease;
She sees the Musician, 'tis all that she sees!

He stands, backed by the wall;—he abates not his din;
His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in,
From the old and the young, from the poorest; and there!
The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a band;
I am glad for him, blind as he is!—all the while
If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall Man, a giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight;
Can he keep himself still, if he would? oh, not he!
The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

Mark that Cripple who leans on his crutch; like a tower
That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour!—
That Mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the Babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream:
They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you
Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue!

1806

XV

STAR-GAZERS

WHAT crowd is this? what have we here! we must not pass it by;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The Showman chooses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy
Square;
And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and
fair;
Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands ready
with the fee,
And envies him that 's looking;—what an insight must it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause? Shall thy Imple-
ment have blame,
A boaster that, when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame?
Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault? 11
Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of mightiest
fame,
Doth she betray us when they 're seen? or are they but a
name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her
wrong?
Or is it that, when human Souls a journey long have had
And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad? 20

Or must we be constrained to think that these Spectators
rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore pros-
trate lie?
No, no, this cannot be;—men thirst for power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind
employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine! 28

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
One after One they take their turn, nor have I one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

1806

XVI

WRITTEN IN MARCH

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER

THE Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The Ploughboy is whooping—anon—anon:
There 's joy in the mountains;
There 's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

1802

XVII

LYRE! though such power do in thy magic live
As might from India's farthest plain
Recall the not unwilling Maid,
Assist me to detain
The lovely Fugitive:
Check with thy notes the impulse which, betrayed
By her sweet farewell looks, I longed to aid.
Here let me gaze enrapt upon that eye,
The impregnable and awe-inspiring fort
Of contemplation, the calm port
By reason fenced from winds that sigh
Among the restless sails of vanity.
But if no wish be hers that we should part,
A humbler bliss would satisfy my heart.
Where all things are so fair,
Enough by her dear side to breathe the air
Of this Elysian weather;

And on, or in, or near, the brook, espy
  Shade upon the sunshine lying
    Faint and somewhat pensively;
  And downward Image gaily vying
    With its upright living tree
'Mid silver clouds, and openings of blue sky
As soft almost and deep as her cerulean eye.

Nor less the joy with many a glance
Cast up the Stream or down at her beseeching,
To mark its eddying foam-balls prettily distrest
By ever-changing shape and want of rest;
    Or watch, with mutual teaching,
    The current as it plays
    In flashing leaps and stealthy creeps
    Adown a rocky maze;
Or note (translucent summer's happiest chance!)
In the slope-channel floored with pebbles bright,
Stones of all hues, gem emulous of gem,
So vivid that they take from keenest sight
The liquid veil that seeks not to hide them.

Published 1842

XVIII

BEGGARS

SHE had a tall man's height or more;
  Her face from summer's noontide heat
No bonnet shaded, but she wore
A mantle, to her very feet
Descending with a graceful flow,
And on her head a cap as white as new-fallen snow.

Her skin was of Egyptian brown:
Haughty, as if her eye had seen
Its own light to a distance thrown,
She towered, fit person for a Queen
To lead those ancient Amazonian files;
Or ruling Bandit's wife among the Grecian isles.

Advancing, forth she stretched her hand
And begged an alms with doleful plea
That ceased not; on our English land
Such woes, I knew, could never be;
And yet a boon I gave her, for the creature
Was beautiful to see—'a weed of glorious feature.'

I left her, and pursued my way;
And soon before me did espy
A pair of little Boys at play,
Chasing a crimson butterfly;
The taller followed with his hat in hand,
Wreathed round with yellow flowers the gayest of the land.

The other wore a rimless crown
With leaves of laurel stuck about;
And while both followed up and down,
Each whooping with a merry shout,
In their fraternal features I could trace
Unquestionable lines of that wild Suppliant's face.

Yet *they*, so blithe of heart, seemed fit
For finest tasks of earth or air:
Wings let them have, and they might flit
Precursors to Aurora's car,
Scattering fresh flowers; though happier far, I ween,
To hunt their fluttering game o'er rock and level green.

They dart across my path—but lo,
Each ready with a plaintive whine!
Said I, 'not half an hour ago
Your Mother has had alms of mine.'
'That cannot be,' one answered—'she is dead':—
I looked reproof—they saw—but neither hung his head.

'She has been dead, Sir, many a day.'—
'Hush, boys! you're telling me a lie;
It was your Mother, as I say!'
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
'Come! come!' cried one, and without more ado
Off to some other play the joyous Vagrants flew!

1802

XIX

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING

COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER

WHERE are they now, those wanton Boys?
For whose free range the dædal earth
Was filled with animated toys,
And implements of frolic mirth;

With tools for ready wit to guide;
And ornaments of seemlier pride,
More fresh, more bright, than princes wear;
For what one moment flung aside,
Another could repair;
What good or evil have they seen
Since I their pastime witnessed here,
Their daring wiles, their sportive cheer?
I ask—but all is dark between!

They met me in a genial hour,
When universal nature breathed
As with the breath of one sweet flower,—
A time to overrule the power
Of discontent, and check the birth
Of thoughts with better thoughts at strife,
The most familiar bane of life
Since parting Innocence bequeathed
Mortality to Earth!
Soft clouds, the whitest of the year,
Sailed through the sky—the brooks ran clear;
The lambs from rock to rock were bounding;
With songs the budded groves resounding;
And to my heart are still endeared
The thoughts with which it then was cheered;
The faith which saw that gladsome pair
Walk through the fire with unsinged hair.
Or, if such faith must needs deceive—
Then, Spirits of beauty and of grace,
Associates in that eager chase;
Ye, who within the blameless mind
Your favourite seat of empire find—
Kind Spirits! may we not believe
That they, so happy and so fair
Through your sweet influence, and the care
Of pitying Heaven, at least were free
From touch of *deadly* injury?
Destined, whate'er their earthly doom,
For mercy and immortal bloom?

1817

XX

GIPSIES

YET are they here, the same unbroken knot
Of human Beings, in the self-same spot!
Men, women, children, yea the frame
Of the whole spectacle the same!

Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night;
That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
—Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours are gone, while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
Much witnessing of change and cheer,
Yet as I left I find them here!
The weary Sun betook himself to rest;—
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
Outshining like a visible God
The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,
Behold the mighty Moon! this way
She looks as if at them—but they
Regard not her:—oh, better wrong and strife
(By nature transient) than this torpid life;
Life which the very stars reprove
As on their silent tasks they move!
Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!
In scorn I speak not;—they are what their birth
And breeding suffer them to be;
Wild outcasts of society!

1807

XXI

RUTH

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live; her thoughts her own;

Herself her own delight;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak:
—While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely Youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout!
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues;
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The cypress and her spire;
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

'How pleasant,' then he said, 'it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

'What days and what bright years! Ah me!
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss;
And all the while,' said he, 'to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this!'

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love:
'For there,' said he, 'are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

'Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

'Beloved Ruth!'—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

'And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife.'
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favoured bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions, linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A Man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn:
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature played?
So kind and so forlorn!

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
'O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

'Before me shone a glorious world—
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

'No more of this; for now, by thee
Dear Ruth! more happily set free
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return.'

Full soon that better mind was gone;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirred him now no more;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came, the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth!—Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May;
—They all were with her in her cell;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain;
She from her prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
There did she rest; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still;
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old:
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers:
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy Child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be,
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

1799

XXII

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

II

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;

But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
'This morning gives us promise of a glorious day.'

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
'What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you.'
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
'How is it that you live, and what is it you do?'

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
'Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.'

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and, when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
'God,' said I, 'be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!'

1802

XXIII

THE THORN

I

'THERE is a Thorn—it looks so old,
In truth, you 'd find it hard to say
How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and grey.
Not higher than a two years' child
It stands erect, this aged Thorn;
No leaves it has, no prickly points;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone
With lichens is it overgrown.

II

'Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown,
With lichens to the very top,
And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
A melancholy crop:
Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And this poor Thorn they clasp it round
So close, you 'd say that they are bent
With plain and manifest intent
To drag it to the ground;
And all have joined in one endeavour
To bury this poor Thorn for ever.

III

'High on a mountain's highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale;
Not five yards from the mountain path,
This Thorn you on your left espy;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water—never dry,
Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns and parching air.

IV

'And, close beside this aged Thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.

All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen;
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been;
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

V

'Ah me! what lovely tints are there
Of olive green and scarlet bright,
In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
Green, red, and pearly white!
This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
Which close beside the Thorn you see,
So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
Is like an infant's grave in size,
As like as like can be:
But never, never any where,
An infant's grave was half so fair.

VI

'Now would you see this aged Thorn,
This pond, and beauteous hill of moss,
You must take care and choose your time
The mountain when to cross.
For oft there sits between the heap,
So like an infant's grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A Woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
"Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"

VII

'At all times of the day and night
This wretched Woman thither goes;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows;
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits
When the blue daylight 's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind 's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
"Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"'

VIII

'Now wherefore, thus, by day and night,
In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
Thus to the dreary mountain-top
Does this poor Woman go?
And why sits she beside the Thorn
When the blue daylight 's in the sky
Or when the whirlwind 's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And wherefore does she cry?—
O wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
Does she repeat that doleful cry?'

IX

'I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows:
But would you gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes;
The hillock like an infant's grave,
The pond—and Thorn, so old and grey;
Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
And, if you see her in her hut—
Then to the spot away!
I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there.'

X

'But wherefore to the mountain-top
Can this unhappy Woman go,
Whatever star is in the skies,
Whatever wind may blow?'
'Full twenty years are past and gone
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave with a maiden's true good-will
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
While friends and kindred all approved
Of him whom tenderly she loved.

XI

'And they had fixed the wedding day,
The morning that must wed them both;
But Stephen to another Maid
Had sworn another oath;
And, with this other Maid, to church

Unthinking Stephen went—
Poor Martha! on that woeful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.

XII

'They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
What could she seek?—or wish to hide?
Her state to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad;
Yet often was she sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
O guilty Father—would that death
Had saved him from that breach of faith!

XIII

'Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas-eve we talked of this,
And grey-haired Wilfred of the glen
Held that the unborn infant wrought
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And, when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

XIV

'More know I not, I wish I did,
And it should all be told to you;
For what became of this poor child
No mortal ever knew;
Nay—if a child to her was born
No earthly tongue could ever tell;
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
Far less could this with proof be said;
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.

XV

'And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
The churchyard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain head:
Some plainly living voices were;
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVI

'But that she goes to this old Thorn,
The Thorn which I described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height:—
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

XVII

''Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain:
No screen, no fence could I discover;
And then the wind! in sooth, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag,—and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag I found
A Woman seated on the ground.

XVIII

'I did not speak—I saw her face;
Her face!—it was enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry,
"Oh misery! oh misery!"
And there she sits, until the moon

Through half the clear blue sky will go;
And, when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders, and you hear her cry,
"Oh misery! oh misery!"'

XIX

'But what's the Thorn? and what the pond?
And what the hill of moss to her?
And what the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir?'
'I cannot tell; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree;
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond:
But all and each agree,
The little Babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XX

'I've heard, the moss is spotted red
With drops of that poor infant's blood;
But kill a new-born infant thus,
I do not think she could!
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again.

XXI

'And some had sworn an oath that she
Should be to public justice brought;
And for the little infant's bones
With spades they would have sought.
But instantly the hill of moss
Before their eyes began to stir!
And, for full fifty yards around,
The grass—it shook upon the ground!
Yet all do still aver
The little Babe lies buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXII

'I cannot tell how this may be,
But plain it is the Thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss that strive
To drag it to the ground;
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry,
"Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"'

1798

XXIV

HART-LEAP WELL

HART-LEAP WELL is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

THE Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud,
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
'Bring forth another horse!' he cried aloud.

'Another horse!'—That shout the vassal heard
And saddled his best Steed, a comely grey;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight hallooed, he cheered and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern;
But breath and eyesight fail; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-side;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy:
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn, on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched:
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot!)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Four roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted Beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, 'Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

'I 'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour, made for rural joy;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

'A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell!
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

'And, gallant Stag! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

'And in the summer-time, when days are long,
I will come hither with my Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

'Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure!'

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
—Soon did the Knight perform what he had said;
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And, near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

The moving accident is not my trade;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine:
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
'Here in old time the hand of man hath been.'

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow:—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
'A jolly place,' said he, 'in times of old!
But something ails it now: the spot is curst.

'You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms!

'The arbour does its own condition tell;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream;
But as to the great Lodge! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

'There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

'Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

'What thoughts must through the creature's brain have past!
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

'For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

'Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's side.

'In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

'Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone.'

'Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine;
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

'The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

'The pleasure-house is dust:—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

'She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But at the coming of the milder day
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

'One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.'

1800

XXV

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song.—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long:—

'From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.—
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!

Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

'They came with banner, spear, and shield;
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

'How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom,
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her!—She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad, I deem,
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower:—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer,
To see her Master and to cheer—
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!

'Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
—Yonder is a man in sight—

Yonder is a house—but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!

'Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away
The last she to her Babe did say:
"My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!"

'Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
—Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distrest;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

'A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,

A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
—Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd-grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of
might.
—Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
"Quell the Scot," exclaims the Lance—
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,

Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar
First shall head the flock of war!'

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed:
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage-hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
'The good Lord Clifford' was the name he bore.

1807

XXVI

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.[1]—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves

[1] The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue.—And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains; and of all that we behold

From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,[1]
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams

[1] This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I do not recollect.

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

1798

XXVII

IT is no Spirit who from heaven hath flown,
And is descending on his embassy;
Nor Traveller gone from earth the heavens to espy!
'Tis Hesperus—there he stands with glittering crown,
First admonition that the sun is down!
For yet it is broad day-light: clouds pass by;
A few are near him still—and now the sky,
He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.
O most ambitious Star! an inquest wrought
Within me when I recognised thy light;
A moment I was startled at the sight:
And, while I gazed, there came to me a thought
That I might step beyond my natural race
As thou seem'st now to do; might one day trace
Some ground not mine; and, strong her strength above,
My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
Tread there with steps that no one shall reprove!

1803

XXVIII

FRENCH REVOLUTION

AS IT APPEARED TO ENTHUSIASTS AT ITS COMMENCEMENT.[1]
REPRINTED FROM 'THE FRIEND'

OH! pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood
Upon our side, we who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!—Oh! times,
In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways

[1] This and the Extract, page 134, and the first Piece of this Class, are from the unpublished Poem of which some account is given in the Preface to THE EXCURSION.

Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!
When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights,
When most intent on making of herself
A prime Enchantress—to assist the work
Which then was going forward in her name!
Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise, that which sets
(As at some moment might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The playfellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength
Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had stirred
Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it;—they, too, who, of gentle mood,
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
And in the region of their peaceful selves;—
Now was it that both found, the meek and lofty
Did both find, helpers to their heart's desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish;
Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,—the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all!

1804

XXIX

YES, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like—but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife—
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too?—yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar—
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God,—of God they are.

1806

XXX

TO A SKYLARK

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

1825

XXXI

LAODAMIA

'WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!'

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear; 'Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamía! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!'

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

'Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode.'

'Great Jove, Laodamía! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

'Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;

And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.'

'Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

'But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

'No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day a second time thy bride!'
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

'This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

'Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—'

'Ah wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

'The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

'But if thou goest, I follow—' 'Peace!' he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—'Ill,' said he,
'The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

'And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

'The wished-for wind was given:—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be

The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand

'Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, belovèd Wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

'But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
"Behold they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?"
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

'And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

'Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream opposed to love.'—

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes re-appears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung—'tis vain:
The hours are past—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight![1]

1814

XXXII

DION

(SEE PLUTARCH)

I

SERENE, and fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turned, a swan-like grace
Of haughtiness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power
And beauty of his happier hour.
And what pure homage *then* did wait
On Dion's virtues, while the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
Softening their inbred dignity austere—
That he, not too elate
With self-sufficing solitude,
But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign,
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

II

Five thousand warriors—O the rapturous day!
Each crowned with flowers, and armed with spear and shield,
Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
To Syracuse advance in bright array.

[1] For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's *Natural History*, lib. xvi. cap. 44; and for the features in the character of Protesilaus, see the *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides. Virgil places the Shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy Lovers,

——His Laodamia
It comes.——

Who leads them on?—The anxious people see
Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming, corslet clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
The gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Lo! when the gates are entered, on each hand,
Down the long street, rich goblets filled with wine
In seemly order stand,
On tables set, as if for rites divine;—
And, as the great Deliverer marches by,
He looks on festal ground with fruits bestrown;
And flowers are on his person thrown
In boundless prodigality;
Nor doth the general voice abstain from prayer,
Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
As if a very Deity he were!

III

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and mourn,
Ilissus, bending o'er thy classic urn!
Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
Your once sweet memory, studious walks and shades!
For him who to divinity aspired,
Not on the breath of popular applause,
But through dependence on the sacred laws
Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retired,
Intent to trace the ideal path of right
(More fair than heaven's broad causeway paved with stars)
Which Dion learned to measure with sublime delight;—
But He hath overleaped the eternal bars;
And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain;
And oft his cogitations sink as low
As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go—
But whence that sudden check? that fearful start!

He hears an uncouth sound—
Anon his lifted eyes
Saw, at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
A Shape of more than mortal size
And hideous aspect, stalking round and round!
A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
And fiercely swept the marble floor,—
Like Auster whirling to and fro,
His force on Caspian foam to try;
Or Boreas when he scours the snow
That skins the plains of Thessaly,
Or when aloft on Mænalus he stops
His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops!

IV

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
Sweeping—vehemently sweeping—
No pause admitted, no design avowed!
'Avaunt, inexplicable Guest!—avaunt,'
Exclaimed the Chieftain—'let me rather see
The coronal that coiling vipers make;
The torch that flames with many a lurid flake,
And the long train of doleful pageantry
Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies haunt;
Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
And, in their anguish, bear what other minds have borne!'

V

But Shapes, that come not at an earthly call,
Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
Lords of the visionary eye whose lid,
Once raised, remains aghast, and will not fall!
Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Implement
Obeys a mystical intent!
Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere;
But should she labour night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear;
Whence angry perturbations,—and that look
Which no philosophy can brook!

VI

Ill-fated Chief! there are whose hopes are built
Upon the ruins of thy glorious name;
Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
Pursue thee with their deadly aim!

O matchless perfidy ! portentous lust
Of monstrous crime !—that horror-striking blade,
Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
The noble Syracusan low in dust !
Shudder'd the walls—the marble city wept—
And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh ;
But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
As he had fallen in magnanimity ;
Of spirit too capacious to require
That Destiny her course should change ; too just
To his own native greatness to desire
That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.
So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely state,
He left this moral grafted on his Fate ;
'Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends.'

1816

XXXIII

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE

I

WITHIN the mind strong fancies work,
A deep delight the bosom thrills,
Oft as I pass along the fork
Of these fraternal hills :
Where, save the rugged road, we find
No appanage of human kind,
Nor hint of man ; if stone or rock
Seem not his handy-work to mock
By something cognizably shaped ;
Mockery—or model roughly hewn,
And left as if by earthquake strewn,
Or from the Flood escaped :
Altars for Druid service fit,
(But where no fire was ever lit,
Unless the glow-worm to the skies
Thence offer nightly sacrifice) ;
Wrinkled Egyptian monument ;
Green moss-grown tower ; or hoary tent ;

Tents of a camp that never shall be raised—
On which four thousand years have gazed!

II

Ye plough-shares sparkling on the slopes!
Ye snow-white lambs that trip
Imprisoned 'mid the formal props
Of restless ownership!
Ye trees, that may to-morrow fall
To feed the insatiate Prodigal!
Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and fields,
All that the fertile valley shields;
Wages of folly—baits of crime,
Of life's uneasy game the stake,
Playthings that keep the eyes awake
Of drowsy, dotard Time;—
O care! O guilt!—O vales and plains,
Here, 'mid his own unvexed domains,
A Genius dwells, that can subdue
At once all memory of You,—
Most potent when mists veil the sky,
Mists that distort and magnify,
While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
Sigh forth their ancient melodies!

III

List to those shriller notes!—*that* march
Perchance was on the blast,
When, through this Height's inverted arch,
Rome's earliest legion passed!
—They saw, adventurously impelled,
And older eyes than theirs beheld,
This block—and yon, whose church-like frame
Gives to this savage Pass its name.
Aspiring Road! that lov'st to hide
Thy daring in a vapoury bourn,
Not seldom may the hour return
When thou shalt be my guide:
And I (as all men may find cause,
When life is at a weary pause,
And they have panted up the hill
Of duty with reluctant will)
Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
For the rich bounties of constraint;
Whence oft invigorating transports flow
That choice lacked courage to bestow!

IV

My Soul was grateful for delight
That wore a threatening brow;
A veil is lifted—can she slight
The scene that opens now?
Though habitation none appear,
The greenness tells, man must be there;
The shelter—that the pérspective
Is of the clime in which we live;
Where Toil pursues his daily round;
Where Pity sheds sweet tears—and Love,
In woodbine bower or birchen grove,
Inflicts his tender wound.
—Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
How beautiful the world below;
Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
The brook adown the rocky steeps.
Farewell, thou desolate Domain!
Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,
Carols like a shepherd-boy;
And who is she?—Can that be Joy!
Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,
Smoothly skims the meadows wide;
While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,
To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
'Whate'er the weak may dread, the wicked dare,
Thy lot, O Man, is good, thy portion fair!'

1817

XXXIV

TO ENTERPRISE

KEEP for the Young the impassioned smile
Shed from thy countenance, as I see thee stand
High on that chalky cliff of Britain's Isle,
A slender volume grasping in thy hand—
(Perchance the pages that relate
The various turns of Crusoe's fate)—
Ah, spare the exulting smile,
And drop thy pointing finger bright
As the first flash of beacon light;
But neither veil thy head in shadows dim,
Nor turn thy face away
From One who, in the evening of his day,
To thee would offer no presumptuous hymn!

I

Bold Spirit! who art free to rove
Among the starry courts of Jove,
And oft in splendour dost appear
Embodied to poetic eyes,
While traversing this nether sphere,
Where Mortals call thee ENTERPRISE.
Daughter of Hope! her favourite Child,
Whom she to young Ambition bore,
When hunter's arrow first defiled
The grove, and stained the turf with gore;
Thee wingèd Fancy took, and nursed
On broad Euphrates' palmy shore,
And where the mightier Waters burst
From caves of Indian mountains hoar!
She wrapped thee in a panther's skin;
And Thou, thy favourite food to win,
The flame-eyed eagle oft wouldst scare
From her rock-fortress in mid air,
With infant shout; and often sweep,
Paired with the ostrich, o'er the plain;
Or, tired with sport, wouldst sink asleep
Upon the couchant lion's mane!
With rolling years thy strength increased;
And, far beyond thy native East,
To thee, by varying titles known
As variously thy power was shown,
Did incense-bearing altars rise,
Which caught the blaze of sacrifice,
From suppliants panting for the skies!

II

What though this ancient Earth be trod
No more by step of Demi-god
Mounting from glorious deed to deed
As thou from clime to clime didst lead;
Yet still the bosom beating high,
And the hushed farewell of an eye
Where no procrastinating gaze
A last infirmity betrays,
Prove that thy heaven-descended sway
Shall ne'er submit to cold decay.
By thy divinity impelled,
The Stripling seeks the tented field;
The aspiring Virgin kneels; and, pale
With awe, receives the hallowed veil,

A soft and tender Heroine
Vowed to severer discipline;
Inflamed by thee, the blooming Boy
Makes of the whistling shrouds a toy,
And of the ocean's dismal breast
A play-ground,—or a couch of rest;
'Mid the blank world of snow and ice,
Thou to his dangers dost enchain
The Chamois-chaser awed in vain
By chasm or dizzy precipice;
And hast Thou not with triumph seen
How soaring Mortals glide between
Or through the clouds, and brave the light
With bolder than Icarian flight?
How they, in bells of crystal, dive—
Where winds and waters cease to strive—
For no unholy visitings,
Among the monsters of the Deep,
And all the sad and precious things
Which there in ghastly silence sleep?
Or, adverse tides and currents headed,
And breathless calms no longer dreaded,
In never-slackening voyage go
Straight as an arrow from the bow;
And, slighting sails and scorning oars,
Keep faith with Time on distant shores?
—Within our fearless reach are placed
The secrets of the burning Waste;
Egyptian tombs unlock their dead,
Nile trembles at his fountain head;
Thou speak'st—and lo! the polar Seas
Unbosom their last mysteries.
—But oh! what transports, what sublime reward,
Won from the world of mind, dost thou prepare
For philosophic Sage; or high-souled Bard
Who, for thy service trained in lonely woods,
Hath fed on pageants floating through the air,
Or calentured in depth of limpid floods;
Nor grieves—tho' doomed thro' silent night to bear
The domination of his glorious themes,
Or struggle in the net-work of thy dreams!

III

If there be movements in the Patriot's soul,
From source still deeper, and of higher worth,
'Tis thine the quickening impulse to control,
And in due season send the mandate forth;

Thy call a prostrate Nation can restore,
When but a single Mind resolves to crouch no more.

IV

Dread Minister of wrath!
Who to their destined punishment dost urge
The Pharaohs of the earth, the men of hardened heart!
Not unassisted by the flattering stars,
Thou strew'st temptation o'er the path
When they in pomp depart
With trampling horses and refulgent cars—
Soon to be swallowed by the briny surge;
Or cast, for lingering death, on unknown strands;
Or caught amid a whirl of desert sands—
An Army now, and now a living hill
That a brief while heaves with convulsive throes—
Then all is still;
Or, to forget their madness and their woes,
Wrapt in a winding-sheet of spotless snows!

V

Back flows the willing current of my Song:
If to provoke such doom the Impious dare,
Why should it daunt a blameless prayer?
—Bold Goddess! range our Youth among;
Nor let thy genuine impulse fail to beat
In hearts no longer young;
Still may a veteran Few have pride
In thoughts whose sternness makes them sweet;
In fixed resolves by Reason justified;
That to their object cleave like sleet
Whitening a pine tree's northern side,
When fields are naked far and wide,
And withered leaves, from earth's cold breast
Up-caught in whirlwinds, nowhere can find rest.

VI

But if such homage thou disdain
As doth with mellowing years agree,
One rarely absent from thy train
More humble favours may obtain
For thy contented Votary.
She, who incites the frolic lambs
In presence of their heedless dams,

And to the solitary fawn
Vouchsafes her lessons, bounteous Nymph
That wakes the breeze, the sparkling lymph
Doth hurry to the lawn;
She, who inspires that strain of joyance holy
Which the sweet Bird, misnamed the melancholy,
Pours forth in shady groves, shall plead for me;
And vernal mornings opening bright
With views of undefined delight,
And cheerful songs, and suns that shine
On busy days, with thankful nights, be mine.

VII

But thou, O Goddess! in thy favourite Isle
(Freedom's impregnable redoubt,
The wide earth's store-house fenced about
With breakers roaring to the gales
That stretch a thousand thousand sails)
Quicken the slothful, and exalt the vile!—
Thy impulse is the life of Fame;
Glad Hope would almost cease to be
If torn from thy society;
And Love, when worthiest of his name,
Is proud to walk the earth with Thee!

Between 1820 and 1822

XXXV

TO ——

ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF HELVELLYN

INMATE of a mountain-dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;
Awed, delighted, and amazed!

Potent was the spell that bound thee
Not unwilling to obey;
For blue Ether's arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo! the dwindled woods and meadows;
What a vast abyss is there!
Lo! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings—heavenly fair!

And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield!

Maiden! now take flight;—inherit
Alps or Andes—they are thine!
With the morning's roseate Spirit
Sweep their length of snowy line;

Or survey their bright dominions
In the gorgeous colours drest
Flung from off the purple pinions,
Evening spreads throughout the west!

Thine are all the choral fountains
Warbling in each sparry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains;
Listen to their songs!—or halt,

To Niphates' top invited,
Whither spiteful Satan steered;
Or descend where the ark alighted,
When the green earth re-appeared;

For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
To confess their majesty!

1816

XXXVI

TO A YOUNG LADY

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY

DEAR Child of Nature, let them rail!
—There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold;
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,
And treading among flowers of joy

Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

Published 1802

XXXVII

WATER FOWL

'Let me be allowed the aid of verse to describe the evolutions which these visitants sometimes perform, on a fine day towards the close of winter.'
—*Extract from the Author's Book on the Lakes.*

MARK how the feathered tenants of the flood,
With grace of motion that might scarcely seem
Inferior to angelical, prolong
Their curious pastime! shaping in mid air
(And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars
High as the level of the mountain-tops)
A circuit ampler than the lake beneath—
Their own domain; but ever, while intent
On tracing and retracing that large round,
Their jubilant activity evolves
Hundreds of curves and circlets, to and fro,
Upward and downward, progress intricate
Yet unperplexed, as if one spirit swayed
Their indefatigable flight. 'Tis done—
Ten times, or more, I fancied it had ceased;
But lo! the vanished company again
Ascending; they approach—I hear their wings,
Faint, faint at first; and then an eager sound,
Past in a moment—and as faint again!
They tempt the sun to sport amid their plumes;
They tempt the water, or the gleaming ice,
To show them a fair image; 'tis themselves,
Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering plain,
Painted more soft and fair as they descend
Almost to touch;—then up again aloft,
Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
As if they scorned both resting-place and rest!

1812

XXXVIII

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB[1]

THIS Height a ministering Angel might select:
For from the summit of Black Comb (dread name
Derived from clouds and storms!) the amplest range
Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
That British ground commands:—low dusky tracts,
Where Trent is nursed, far southward! Cambrian hills
To the south-west, a multitudinous show;
And, in a line of eye-sight linked with these,
The hoary peaks of Scotland that give birth
To Tiviot's stream, to Annan, Tweed, and Clyde:—
Crowding the quarter whence the sun comes forth
Gigantic mountains rough with crags; beneath,
Right at the imperial station's western base,
Main ocean, breaking audibly, and stretched
Far into silent regions blue and pale;—
And visibly engirding Mona's Isle
That, as we left the plain, before our sight
Stood like a lofty mount, uplifting slowly
(Above the convex of the watery globe)
Into clear view the cultured fields that streak
Her habitable shores, but now appears
A dwindled object, and submits to lie
At the spectator's feet.—Yon azure ridge,
Is it a perishable cloud? Or there
Do we behold the line of Erin's coast?
Land sometimes by the roving shepherd-swain
(Like the bright confines of another world)
Not doubtfully perceived.—Look homeward now!
In depth, in height, in circuit, how serene
The spectacle, how pure!—Of Nature's works,
In earth, and air, and earth-embracing sea,
A revelation infinite it seems;
Display august of man's inheritance,
Of Britain's calm felicity and power!

1813

[1] Black Comb stands at the southern extremity of Cumberland: its base covers a much greater extent of ground than any other mountain in those parts; and, from its situation, the summit commands a more extensive view than any other point in Britain.

XXXIX

THE HAUNTED TREE

TO ——

THOSE silver clouds collected round the sun
His mid-day warmth abate not, seeming less
To overshade than multiply his beams
By soft reflection—grateful to the sky,
To rocks, fields, woods. Nor doth our human sense
Ask, for its pleasure, screen or canopy
More ample than the time-dismantled Oak
Spreads o'er this tuft of heath, which now, attired
In the whole fulness of its bloom, affords
Couch beautiful as e'er for earthly use
Was fashioned; whether by the hand of Art,
That eastern Sultan, amid flowers enwrought
On silken tissue, might diffuse his limbs
In languor; or by Nature, for repose
Of panting Wood-nymph, wearied with the chase.
O Lady! fairer in thy Poet's sight
Than fairest spiritual creature of the groves,
Approach;—and, thus invited, crown with rest
The noon-tide hour: though truly some there are
Whose footsteps superstitiously avoid
This venerable Tree; for, when the wind
Blows keenly, it sends forth a creaking sound
(Above the general roar of woods and crags)
Distinctly heard from far—a doleful note!
As if (so Grecian shepherds would have deemed)
The Hamadryad, pent within, bewailed
Some bitter wrong. Nor is it unbelieved,
By ruder fancy, that a troubled ghost
Haunts the old trunk; lamenting deeds of which
The flowery ground is conscious. But no wind
Sweeps now along this elevated ridge;
Not even a zephyr stirs;—the obnoxious Tree
Is mute; and, in his silence, would look down,
O lovely Wanderer of the trackless hills,
On thy reclining form with more delight
Than his coevals in the sheltered vale
Seem to participate, the while they view
Their own far-stretching arms and leafy heads
Vividly pictured in some glassy pool,
That, for a brief space, checks the hurrying stream!

1819

XL

THE TRIAD

SHOW me the noblest Youth of present time,
Whose trembling fancy would to love give birth;
Some God or Hero, from the Olympian clime
Returned, to seek a Consort upon earth;
Or, in no doubtful prospect, let me see
The brightest star of ages yet to be,
And I will mate and match him blissfully.

I will not fetch a Naiad from a flood
Pure as herself—(song lacks not mightier power)
Nor leaf-crowned Dryad from a pathless wood,
Nor Sea-nymph glistening from her coral bower;
Mere Mortals, bodied forth in vision still,
Shall with Mount Ida's triple lustre fill
The chaster coverts of a British hill.

'Appear!—obey my lyre's command!
Come, like the Graces, hand in hand!
For ye, though not by birth allied,
Are Sisters in the bond of love;
Nor shall the tongue of envious pride
Presume those interweavings to reprove
In you, which that fair progeny of Jove
Learned from the tuneful spheres that glide
In endless union, earth and sea above.'
—I sing in vain;—the pines have hushed their waving:
A peerless Youth expectant at my side,
Breathless as they, with unabated craving
Looks to the earth, and to the vacant air;
And, with a wandering eye that seems to chide,
Asks of the clouds what occupants they hide:—
But why solicit more than sight could bear,
By casting on a moment all we dare?
Invoke we those bright Beings one by one;
And what was boldly promised, truly shall be done.

'Fear not a constraining measure!
—Yielding to this gentle spell,
Lucida! from domes of pleasure,
Or from cottage-sprinkled dell,
Come to regions solitary,
Where the eagle builds her aery,
Above the hermit's long-forsaken cell!'
—She comes!—behold

That Figure, like a ship with snow-white sail.
Nearer she draws; a breeze uplifts her veil;
Upon her coming wait
As pure a sunshine and as soft a gale
As e'er, on herbage covering earthly mould,
Tempted the bird of Juno to unfold
His richest splendour—when his veering gait
And every motion of his starry train
Seem governed by a strain
Of music, audible to him alone.

'O Lady, worthy of earth's proudest throne!
Nor less, by excellence of nature, fit
Beside an unambitious hearth to sit
Domestic queen, where grandeur is unknown;
What living man could fear
The worst of Fortune's malice, wert Thou near,
Humbling that lily-stem, thy sceptre meek,
That its fair flowers may from his cheek
Brush the too happy tear?
——Queen, and handmaid lowly!
Whose skill can speed the day with lively cares,
And banish melancholy
By all that mind invents or hand prepares;
O Thou, against whose lip, without its smile
And in its silence even, no heart is proof;
Whose goodness, sinking deep, would reconcile
The softest Nursling of a gorgeous palace
To the bare life beneath the hawthorn-roof
Of Sherwood's Archer, or in caves of Wallace—
Who that hath seen thy beauty could content
His soul with but a *glimpse* of heavenly day?
Who that hath loved thee, but would lay
His strong hand on the wind, if it were bent
To take thee in thy majesty away?
—Pass onward (even the glancing deer
Till we depart intrude not here;)
That mossy slope, o'er which the woodbine throws
A canopy, is smoothed for thy repose!'

Glad moment is it when the throng
Of warblers in full concert strong
Strive, and not vainly strive, to rout
The lagging shower, and force coy Phœbus out,
Met by the rainbow's form divine,
Issuing from her cloudy shrine;—

So may the thrillings of the lyre
Prevail to further our desire,
While to these shades a sister Nymph I call.

'Come, if the notes thine ear may pierce,
Come, youngest of the lovely Three,
Submissive to the might of verse
And the dear voice of harmony,
By none more deeply felt than Thee!'
—I sang; and lo! from pastimes virginal
She hastens to the tents
Of nature, and the lonely elements.
Air sparkles round her with a dazzling sheen;
But mark her glowing cheek, her vesture green!
And, as if wishful to disarm
Or to repay the potent Charm,
She bears the stringèd lute of old romance,
That cheered the trellised arbour's privacy,
And soothed war-wearied knights in raftered hall.
How vivid, yet how delicate, her glee!
So tripped the Muse, inventress of the dance;
So, truant in waste woods, the blithe Euphrosyne!

But the ringlets of that head
Why are they ungarlanded?
Why bedeck her temples less
Than the simplest shepherdess?
Is it not a brow inviting
Choicest flowers that ever breathed,
Which the myrtle would delight in
With Idalian rose enwreathed?
But her humility is well content
With *one* wild floweret (call it not forlorn)
Flower of the winds, beneath her bosom worn—
Yet more for love than ornament.

Open, ye thickets! let her fly,
Swift as a Thracian Nymph o'er field and height!
For She, to all but those who love her, shy,
Would gladly vanish from a Stranger's sight;
Though, where she is beloved and loves,
Light as the wheeling butterfly she moves;
Her happy spirit as a bird is free,
That rifles blossoms on a tree,
Turning them inside out with arch audacity.
Alas! how little can a moment show

Of an eye where feeling plays
In ten thousand dewy rays;
A face o'er which a thousand shadows go!
—She stops—is fastened to that rivulet's side;
And there (while, with sedater mien,
O'er timid waters that have scarcely left
Their birth-place in the rocky cleft
She bends) at leisure may be seen
Features to old ideal grace allied,
Amid their smiles and dimples dignified—
Fit countenance for the soul of primal truth;
The bland composure of eternal youth!

What more changeful than the sea?
But over his great tides
Fidelity presides;
And this light-hearted Maiden constant is as he.
High is her aim as heaven above,
And wide as ether her good-will;
And, like the lowly reed, her love
Can drink its nurture from the scantiest rill:
Insight as keen as frosty star
Is to *her* charity no bar,
Nor interrupts her frolic graces
When she is, far from these wild places,
Encircled by familiar faces.

O the charm that manners draw,
Nature, from thy genuine law!
If from what her hand would do,
Her voice would utter, aught ensue
Untoward or unfit;
She, in benign affections pure,
In self-forgetfulness secure,
Sheds round the transient harm or vague mischance
A light unknown to tutored elegance:
Hers is not a cheek shame-stricken,
But her blushes are joy-flushes;
And the fault (if fault it be)
Only ministers to quicken
Laughter-loving gaiety,
And kindle sportive wit—
Leaving this Daughter of the mountains free,
As if she knew that Oberon king of Faery
Had crossed her purpose with some quaint vagary,
And heard his viewless bands
Over their mirthful triumph clapping hands.

'Last of the Three, though eldest born,
Reveal thyself, like pensive Morn
Touched by the skylark's earliest note,
Ere humbler gladness be afloat.
But whether in the semblance drest
Of Dawn—or Eve, fair vision of the west,
Come with each anxious hope subdued
By woman's gentle fortitude,
Each grief, through meekness, settling into rest.
— Or I would hail thee when some high-wrought page
Of a closed volume lingering in thy hand
Has raised thy spirit to a peaceful stand
Among the glories of a happier age.'

Her brow hath opened on me—see it there,
Brightening the umbrage of her hair;
So gleams the crescent moon, that loves
To be descried through shady groves.
Tenderest bloom is on her cheek;
Wish not for a richer streak;
Nor dread the depth of meditative eye;
But let thy love, upon that azure field
Of thoughtfulness and beauty, yield
Its homage offered up in purity.
What wouldst thou more? In sunny glade,
Or under leaves of thickest shade,
Was such a stillness e'er diffused
Since earth grew calm while angels mused?
Softly she treads, as if her foot were loth
To crush the mountain dew-drops—soon to melt
On the flower's breast; as if she felt
That flowers themselves, whate'er their hue,
With all their fragrance, all their glistening,
Call to the heart for inward listening—
And though for bridal wreaths and tokens true
Welcomed wisely; though a growth
Which the careless shepherd sleeps on,
As fitly spring from turf the mourner weeps on—
And without wrong are cropped the marble tomb
strew.
The Charm is over; the mute Phantoms gone,
Nor will return—but droop not, favoured Youth;
The apparition that before thee shone
Obeyed a summons covetous of truth.
From these wild rocks thy footsteps I will guide
To bowers in which thy fortune may be tried,
And one of the bright Three become thy happy Bride.

1828

XLI

THE WISHING-GATE

In the vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old highway leading to Ambleside, is a gate, which, time out of mind, has been called the Wishing-gate, from a belief that wishes formed or indulged there have a favourable issue.

HOPE rules a land for ever green:
All powers that serve the bright-eyed Queen
Are confident and gay;
Clouds at her bidding disappear;
Points she to aught?—the bliss draws near,
And Fancy smooths the way.

Not such the land of Wishes—there
Dwell fruitless day-dreams, lawless prayer,
And thoughts with things at strife;
Yet how forlorn, should *ye* depart,
Ye superstitions of the *heart*,
How poor, were human life!

When magic lore abjured its might,
Ye did not forfeit one dear right,
One tender claim abate;
Witness this symbol of your sway,
Surviving near the public way,
The rustic Wishing-gate!

Inquire not if the faery race
Shed kindly influence on the place,
Ere northward they retired;
If here a warrior left a spell,
Panting for glory as he fell;
Or here a saint expired.

Enough that all around is fair,
Composed with Nature's finest care,
And in her fondest love—
Peace to embosom and content—
To overawe the turbulent,
The selfish to reprove.

Yea! even the Stranger from afar,
Reclining on this moss-grown bar,
Unknowing, and unknown,
The infection of the ground partakes,
Longing for his Belov'd—who makes
All happiness her own.

Then why should conscious Spirits fear
The mystic stirrings that are here,
The ancient faith disclaim?
The local Genius ne'er befriends
Desires whose course in folly ends,
Whose just reward is shame.

Smile if thou wilt, but not in scorn,
If some, by ceaseless pains outworn,
Here crave an easier lot;
If some have thirsted to renew
A broken vow, or bind a true,
With firmer, holier knot.

And not in vain, when thoughts are cast
Upon the irrevocable past,
Some Penitent sincere
May for a worthier future sigh,
While trickles from his downcast eye
No unavailing tear.

The Worldling, pining to be freed
From turmoil, who would turn or speed
The current of his fate,
Might stop before this favoured scene,
At Nature's call, nor blush to lean
Upon the Wishing-gate.

The Sage, who feels how blind, how weak
Is man, though loth such help to *seek*,
Yet, passing, here might pause,
And thirst for insight to allay
Misgiving, while the crimson day
In quietness withdraws;

Or when the church-clock's knell profound
To Time's first step across the bound
Of midnight makes reply;
Time pressing on with starry crest
To filial sleep upon the breast
Of dread eternity.

1828

XLII

THE WISHING-GATE DESTROYED

'TIS gone—with old belief and dream
That round it clung, and tempting scheme
Released from fear and doubt;
And the bright landscape too must lie,
By this blank wall, from every eye,
Relentlessly shut out.

Bear witness ye who seldom passed
That opening—but a look ye cast
Upon the lake below,
What spirit-stirring power it gained
From faith which here was entertained,
Though reason might say no.

Blest is that ground, where, o'er the springs
Of history, Glory claps her wings,
Fame sheds the exulting tear;
Yet earth is wide, and many a nook
Unheard of is, like this, a book
For modest meanings dear.

It was in sooth a happy thought
That grafted, on so fair a spot,
So confident a token
Of coming good;—the charm is fled;
Indulgent centuries spun a thread,
Which one harsh day has broken.

Alas! for him who gave the word;
Could he no sympathy afford,
Derived from earth or heaven,
To hearts so oft by hope betrayed,
Their very wishes wanted aid
Which here was freely given?

Where, for the love-lorn maiden's wound,
Will now so readily be found
A balm of expectation?
Anxious for far-off children, where
Shall mothers breathe a like sweet air
Of home-felt consolation?

And not unfelt will prove the loss
'Mid trivial care and petty cross

And each day's shallow grief;
Though the most easily beguiled
Were oft among the first that smiled
At their own fond belief.

If still the reckless change we mourn,
A reconciling thought may turn
To harm that might lurk here,
Ere judgment prompted from within
Fit aims, with courage to begin,
And strength to persevere.

Not Fortune's slave is Man: our state
Enjoins, while firm resolves await
On wishes just and wise,
That strenuous action follow both,
And life be one perpetual growth
Of heaven-ward enterprise.

So taught, so trained, we boldly face
All accidents of time and place;
Whatever props may fail,
Trust in that sovereign law can spread
New glory o'er the mountain's head,
Fresh beauty through the vale.

That truth informing mind and heart,
The simplest cottager may part,
Ungrieved, with charm and spell;
And yet, lost Wishing-gate, to thee
The voice of grateful memory
Shall bid a kind farewell!

Published 1842

XLIII

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK

A ROCK there is whose homely front
The passing traveller slights;
Yet there the glow-worms hang their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights;
And one coy Primrose to that Rock
The vernal breeze invites.

What hideous warfare hath been waged,
What kingdoms overthrown,
Since first I spied that Primrose-tuft
And marked it for my own;
A lasting link in Nature's chain
From highest heaven let down!

The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
Their fellowship renew;
The stems are faithful to the root,
That worketh out of view;
And to the rock the root adheres
In every fibre true.

Close clings to earth the living rock,
Though threatening still to fall;
The earth is constant to her sphere;
And God upholds them all:
So blooms this lonely Plant, nor dreads
Her annual funeral.

. . . . .

Here closed the meditative strain;
But air breathed soft that day,
The hoary mountain-heights were cheered,
The sunny vale looked gay;
And to the Primrose of the Rock
I gave this after-lay.

I sang—Let myriads of bright flowers,
Like Thee, in field and grove
Revive unenvied;—mightier far,
Than tremblings that reprove
Our vernal tendencies to hope,
Is God's redeeming love;

That love which changed—for wan disease,
For sorrow that had bent
O'er hopeless dust, for withered age—
Their moral element,
And turned the thistles of a curse
To types beneficent.

Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
The reasoning Sons of Men,
From one oblivious winter called
Shall rise, and breathe again;
And in eternal summer lose
Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of heart descends
This prescience from on high,
The faith that elevates the just,
Before and when they die;
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
A court for Deity.

1831

XLIV

PRESENTIMENTS

PRESENTIMENTS! they judge not right
Who deem that ye from open light
Retire in fear of shame;
All *heaven-born* Instincts shun the touch
Of vulgar sense,—and, being such,
Such privilege ye claim.

The tear whose source I could not guess,
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,
Were mine in early days;
And now, unforced by time to part
With fancy, I obey my heart,
And venture on your praise.

What though some busy foes to good,
Too potent over nerve and blood,
Lurk near you—and combine
To taint the health which ye infuse;
This hides not from the moral Muse
Your origin divine.

How oft from you, derided Powers!
Comes Faith that in auspicious hours
Builds castles, not of air:
Bodings unsanctioned by the will
Flow from your visionary skill,
And teach us to beware.

The bosom-weight, your stubborn gift,
That no philosophy can lift,
Shall vanish, if ye please,
Like morning mist: and, where it lay,
The spirits at your bidding play
In gaiety and ease.

Star guided contemplations move
Through space, though calm, not raised above
Prognostics that ye rule;
The naked Indian of the wild,
And haply too the cradled Child,
Are pupils of your school.

But who can fathom your intents,
Number their signs or instruments?

A rainbow, a sunbeam,
A subtle smell that Spring unbinds,
Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds,
An echo, or a dream.

The laughter of the Christmas hearth
With sighs of self-exhausted mirth
Ye feelingly reprove;
And daily, in the conscious breast,
Your visitations are a test
And exercise of love.

When some great change gives boundless scope
To an exulting Nation's hope,
Oft, startled and made wise
By your low-breathed interpretings,
The simply-meek foretaste the springs
Of bitter contraries.

Ye daunt the proud array of war,
Pervade the lonely ocean far
As sail hath been unfurled;
For dancers in the festive hall
What ghastly partners hath your call
Fetched from the shadowy world.

'Tis said that warnings ye dispense,
Emboldened by a keener sense;
That men have lived for whom,
With dread precision, ye made clear
The hour that in a distant year
Should knell them to the tomb.

Unwelcome insight! Yet there are
Blest times when mystery is laid bare,
Truth shows a glorious face,
While on that isthmus which commands
The councils of both worlds she stands,
Sage Spirits! by your grace.

God, who instructs the brutes to scent
All changes of the element,
Whose wisdom fixed the scale
Of natures, for our wants provides
By higher, sometimes humbler, guides,
When lights of reason fail.

1830

XLV

VERNAL ODE

'Rerum Natura tota est nusquam magis quam in minimis.'
PLIN. *Nat. Hist.* XI. i. 2, 4.

I

BENEATH the concave of an April sky,
When all the fields with freshest green were dight,
Appeared, in presence of the spiritual eye
That aids or supersedes our grosser sight,
The form and rich habiliments of One
Whose countenance bore resemblance to the sun,
When it reveals, in evening majesty,
Features half lost amid their own pure light.
Poised like a weary cloud, in middle air
He hung,—then floated with angelic ease
(Softening that bright effulgence by degrees)
Till he had reached a summit sharp and bare,
Where oft the venturous heifer drinks the noontide breeze.
Upon the apex of that lofty cone
Alighted, there the Stranger stood alone;
Fair as a gorgeous Fabric of the east
Suddenly raised by some enchanter's power,
Where nothing was; and firm as some old Tower
Of Britain's realm, whose leafy crest
Waves high, embellished by a gleaming shower!

II

Beneath the shadow of his purple wings
Rested a golden harp;—he touched the strings;
And, after prelude of unearthly sound
Poured through the echoing hills around,
He sang—
'No wintry desolations,
Scorching blight or noxious dew,
Affect my native habitations;
Buried in glory, far beyond the scope
Of man's inquiring gaze, but to his hope
Imaged, though faintly, in the hue
Profound of night's ethereal blue;
And in the aspect of each radiant orb;—
Some fixed, some wandering with no timid curb;
But wandering star and fixed, to mortal eye,
Blended in absolute serenity,

And free from semblance of decline;—
Fresh as if Evening brought their natal hour,
Her darkness splendour gave, her silence power,
To testify of Love and Grace divine.

III

'What if those bright fires
Shine subject to decay,
Sons haply of extinguished sires,
Themselves to lose their light, or pass away
Like clouds before the wind,
Be thanks poured out to Him whose hand bestows,
Nightly, on human kind
That vision of endurance and repose.
—And though to every draught of vital breath,
Renewed throughout the bounds of earth or ocean,
The melancholy gates of Death
Respond with sympathetic motion;
Though all that feeds on nether air,
Howe'er magnificent or fair,
Grows but to perish, and entrust
Its ruins to their kindred dust;
Yet, by the Almighty's ever-during care,
Her procreant vigils Nature keeps
Amid the unfathomable deeps;
And saves the peopled fields of earth
From dread of emptiness or dearth.
Thus, in their stations, lifting tow'rd the sky
The foliaged head in cloud-like majesty,
The shadow-casting race of trees survive:
Thus, in the train of Spring, arrive
Sweet flowers;—what living eye hath viewed
Their myriads?—endlessly renewed,
Wherever strikes the sun's glad ray;
Where'er the subtle waters stray;
Wherever sportive breezes bend
Their course, or genial showers descend!
Mortals, rejoice! the very Angels quit
Their mansions unsusceptible of change,
Amid your pleasant bowers to sit,
And through your sweet vicissitudes to range!

IV

O, nursed at happy distance from the cares
Of a too-anxious world, mild pastoral Muse!
That to the sparkling crown Urania wears,
And to her sister Clio's laurel wreath,
Prefer'st a garland culled from purple heath,

Or blooming thicket moist with morning dews;
Was such bright Spectacle vouchsafed to me?
And was it granted to the simple ear
Of thy contented Votary
Such melody to hear!
Him rather suits it, side by side with thee,
Wrapped in a fit of pleasing indolence,
While thy tired lute hangs on the hawthorn-tree,
To lie and listen—till o'er-drowsèd sense
Sinks, hardly conscious of the influence—
To the soft murmur of the vagrant Bee.
—A slender sound! yet hoary Time
Doth to the *Soul* exalt it with the chime
Of all his years;—a company
Of ages coming, ages gone;
(Nations from before them sweeping,
Regions in destruction steeping,)
But every awful note in unison
With that faint utterance, which tells
Of treasure sucked from buds and bells,
For the pure keeping of those waxen cells;
Where She—a statist prudent to confer
Upon the common weal; a warrior bold,
Radiant all over with unburnished gold,
And armed with living spear for mortal fight;
A cunning forager
That spreads no waste; a social builder; one
In whom all busy offices unite
With all fine functions that afford delight—
Safe through the winter storm in quiet dwells!

V

And is She brought within the power
Of vision?—o'er this tempting flower
Hovering until the petals stay
Her flight, and take its voice away!—
Observe each wing!—a tiny van!
The structure of her laden thigh,
How fragile! yet of ancestry
Mysteriously remote and high;
High as the imperial front of man;
The roseate bloom on woman's cheek;
The soaring eagle's curvèd beak;
The white plumes of the floating swan;
Old as the tiger's paw, the lion's mane
Ere shaken by that mood of stern disdain

At which the desert trembles.—Humming Bee!
Thy sting was needless then, perchance unknown,
The seeds of malice were not sown;
All creatures met in peace, from fierceness free,
And no pride blended with their dignity.
—Tears had not broken from their source;
Nor Anguish strayed from her Tartarean den;
The golden years maintained a course
Not undiversified though smooth and even;
We were not mocked with glimpse and shadow then,
Bright Seraphs mixed familiarly with men;
And earth and stars composed a universal heaven!

1817

XLVI

DEVOTIONAL INCITEMENTS

'Not to the earth confined,
Ascend to heaven.'

WHERE will they stop, those breathing Powers,
The Spirits of the new-born flowers?
They wander with the breeze, they wind
Where'er the streams a passage find;
Up from their native ground they rise
In mute aërial harmonies;
From humble violet—modest thyme—
Exhaled, the essential odours climb,
As if no space below the sky
Their subtle flight could satisfy:
Heaven will not tax our thoughts with pride
If like ambition be *their* guide.

Roused by this kindliest of May-showers,
The spirit-quickener of the flowers,
That with moist virtue softly cleaves
The buds, and freshens the young leaves,
The birds pour forth their souls in notes
Of rapture from a thousand throats—
Here checked by too impetuous haste,
While there the music runs to waste,
With bounty more and more enlarged,
Till the whole air is overcharged;
Give ear, O Man! to their appeal,
And thirst for no inferior zeal,
Thou, who canst *think*, as well as feel.

Mount from the earth; aspire! aspire!
So pleads the town's cathedral quire,
In strains that from their solemn height
Sink, to attain a loftier flight;
While incense from the altar breathes
Rich fragrance in embodied wreaths;
Or, flung from swinging censer, shrouds
The taper-lights, and curls in clouds
Around angelic Forms, the still
Creation of the painter's skill,
That on the service wait concealed
One moment, and the next revealed.
—Cast off your bonds, awake, arise,
And for no transient ecstasies!
What else can mean the visual plea
Of still or moving imagery—
The iterated summons loud,
Not wasted on the attendant crowd,
Nor wholly lost upon the throng
Hurrying the busy streets along?

Alas! the sanctities combined
By art to unsensualise the mind
Decay and languish; or, as creeds
And humours change, are spurned like weeds:
The priests are from their altars thrust;
Temples are levelled with the dust;
And solemn rites and awful forms
Founder amid fanatic storms.
Yet evermore, through years renewed
In undisturbed vicissitude
Of seasons balancing their flight
On the swift wings of day and night,
Kind Nature keeps a heavenly door
Wide open for the scattered Poor.
Where flower-breathed incense to the skies
Is wafted in mute harmonies;
And ground fresh-cloven by the plough
Is fragrant with a humbler vow;
Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
Chime forth unwearied canticles,
And vapours magnify and spread
The glory of the sun's bright head—
Still constant in her worship, still
Conforming to the eternal Will,
Whether men sow or reap the fields,
Divine monition Nature yields,

That not by bread alone we live,
Or what a hand of flesh can give;
That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart:
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve, with hallowed rest.

1832

XLVII

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK

WOULDST thou be taught, when sleep has taken flight,
By a sure voice that can most sweetly tell,
How far-off yet a glimpse of morning light,
And if to lure the truant back be well,
Forbear to covet a Repeater's stroke,
That, answering to thy touch, will sound the hour;
Better provide thee with a Cuckoo-clock
For service hung behind thy chamber-door;
And in due time the soft spontaneous shock,
The double note, as if with living power,
Will to composure lead—or make thee blithe as bird in bower.

List, Cuckoo—Cuckoo!—oft tho' tempests howl,
Or nipping frost remind thee trees are bare,
How cattle pine, and droop the shivering fowl,
Thy spirits will seem to feed on balmy air:
I speak with knowledge,—by that Voice beguiled,
Thou wilt salute old memories as they throng
Into thy heart; and fancies, running wild
Through fresh green fields, and budding groves among,
Will make thee happy, happy as a child;
Of sunshine wilt thou think, and flowers, and song,
And breathe as in a world where nothing can go wrong.

And know—that, even for him who shuns the day
And nightly tosses on a bed of pain;
Whose joys, from all but memory swept away,
Must come unhoped for, if they come again;
Know—that, for him whose waking thoughts, severe
As his distress is sharp, would scorn my theme,
The mimic notes, striking upon his ear
In sleep, and intermingling with his dream,
Could from sad regions send him to a dear

Delightful land of verdure, shower and gleam,
To mock the *wandering* Voice beside some haunted
stream.

O bounty without measure! while the grace
Of Heaven doth in such wise, from humblest springs,
Pour pleasure forth, and solaces that trace
A mazy course along familiar things,
Well may our hearts have faith that blessings come,
Streaming from founts above the starry sky,
With angels when their own untroubled home
They leave, and speed on nightly embassy
To visit earthly chambers,—and for whom?
Yea, both for souls who God's forbearance try,
And those that seek his help, and for his mercy sigh.

Published 1842

XLVIII

TO THE CLOUDS

ARMY of Clouds! ye wingèd Host in troops
Ascending from behind the motionless brow
Of that tall rock, as from a hidden world,
O whither with such eagerness of speed?
What seek ye, or what shun ye? of the gale
Companions, fear ye to be left behind,
Or racing o'er your blue ethereal field
Contend ye with each other? of the sea
Children, thus post ye over vale and height
To sink upon your mother's lap—and rest?
Or were ye rightlier hailed, when first mine eyes
Beheld in your impetuous march the likeness
Of a wide army pressing on to meet
Or overtake some unknown enemy?—
But your smooth motions suit a peaceful aim;
And Fancy, not less aptly pleased, compares
Your squadrons to an endless flight of birds
Aerial, upon due migration bound
To milder climes; or rather do ye urge
In caravan your hasty pilgrimage
To pause at last on more aspiring heights
Than these, and utter your devotion there
With thunderous voice? Or are ye jubilant,
And would ye, tracking your proud lord the Sun,
Be present at his setting; or the pomp
Of Persian mornings would ye fill, and stand
Poising your splendours high above the heads

Of worshippers kneeling to their up-risen God?
Whence, whence, ye Clouds! this eagerness of speed?
Speak, silent creatures.—They are gone, are fled,
Buried together in yon gloomy mass
That loads the middle heaven; and clear and bright
And vacant doth the region which they thronged
Appear; a calm descent of sky conducting
Down to the unapproachable abyss,
Down to that hidden gulf from which they rose
To vanish—fleet as days and months and years,
Fleet as the generations of mankind,
Power, glory, empire, as the world itself,
The lingering world, when time hath ceased to be.
But the winds roar, shaking the rooted trees,
And see! a bright precursor to a train
Perchance as numerous, overpeers the rock
That sullenly refuses to partake
Of the wild impulse. From a fount of life
Invisible, the long procession moves
Luminous or gloomy, welcome to the vale
Which they are entering, welcome to mine eye
That sees them, to my soul that owns in them,
And in the bosom of the firmament
O'er which they move, wherein they are contained,
A type of her capacious self and all
Her restless progeny.
A humble walk
Here is my body doomed to tread, this path,
A little hoary line and faintly traced,
Work, shall we call it, of the shepherd's foot
Or of his flock?—joint vestige of them both.
I pace it unrepining, for my thoughts
Admit no bondage and my words have wings.
Where is the Orphean lyre, or Druid harp,
To accompany the verse? The mountain blast
Shall be our *hand* of music; he shall sweep
The rocks, and quivering trees, and billowy lake,
And search the fibres of the caves, and they
Shall answer, for our song is of the Clouds,
And the wind loves them; and the gentle gales—
Which by their aid re-clothe the naked lawn
With annual verdure, and revive the woods,
And moisten the parched lips of thirsty flowers—
Love them; and every idle breeze of air
Bends to the favourite burthen. Moon and stars
Keep their most solemn vigils when the Clouds
Watch also, shifting peaceably their place

Like bands of ministering Spirits, or when they lie,
As if some Protean art the change had wrought,
In listless quiet o'er the ethereal deep
Scattered, a Cyclades of various shapes
And all degrees of beauty. O ye Lightnings!
Ye are their perilous offspring; and the Sun—
Source inexhaustible of life and joy,
And type of man's far-darting reason, therefore
In old time worshipped as the god of verse,
A blazing intellectual deity—
Loves his own glory in their looks, and showers
Upon that unsubstantial brotherhood
Visions with all but beatific light
Enriched—too transient, were they not renewed
From age to age, and did not, while we gaze
In silent rapture, credulous desire
Nourish the hope that memory lacks not power
To keep the treasure unimpaired. Vain thought!
Yet why repine, created as we are
For joy and rest, albeit to find them only
Lodged in the bosom of eternal things?

Published 1842

XLIX

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF THE BIRD OF PARADISE

THE gentlest Poet, with free thoughts endowed,
And a true master of the glowing strain,
Might scan the narrow province with disdain
That to the Painter's skill is here allowed.
This, this the Bird of Paradise! disclaim
The daring thought, forget the name;
This the Sun's Bird, whom Glendoveers might own
As no unworthy Partner in their flight
Through seas of ether, where the ruffling sway
Of nether air's rude billows is unknown;
Whom Sylphs, if e'er for casual pastime they
Through India's spicy regions wing their way,
Might bow to as their Lord. What character,
O sovereign Nature! I appeal to thee,
Of all thy feathered progeny
Is so unearthly, and what shape so fair?
So richly decked in variegated down,
Green, sable, shining yellow, shadowy brown,
Tints softly with each other blended,
Hues doubtfully begun and ended;

Or intershooting, and to sight
Lost and recovered, as the rays of light
Glance on the conscious plumes touched here and there?
Full surely, when with such proud gifts of life
Began the pencil's strife,
O'erweening Art was caught as in a snare.

A sense of seemingly presumptuous wrong
Gave the first impulse to the Poet's song;
But, of his scorn repenting soon, he drew
A juster judgment from a calmer view;
And, with a spirit freed from discontent,
Thankfully took an effort that was meant
Not with God's bounty, Nature's love, to vie,
Or made with hope to please that inward eye
Which ever strives in vain itself to satisfy,
But to recall the truth by some faint trace
Of power ethereal and celestial grace,
That in the living Creature find on earth a place.

Published 1842

L

A JEWISH FAMILY

(IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR, UPON THE RHINE)

GENIUS of Raphael! if thy wings
Might bear thee to this glen,
With faithful memory left of things
To pencil dear and pen,
Thou wouldst forego the neighbouring Rhine,
And all his majesty—
A studious forehead to incline
O'er this poor family.

The Mother—her thou must have seen,
In spirit, ere she came
To dwell these rifted rocks between,
Or found on earth a name;
An image, too, of that sweet Boy,
Thy inspirations give—
Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
How beautiful his eyes,
That blend the nature of the star
With that of summer skies!

I speak as if of sense beguiled;
  Uncounted months are gone,
Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
  That exquisite Saint John.

I see the dark-brown curls, the brow,
  The smooth transparent skin,
Refined, as with intent to show
  The holiness within;
The grace of parting Infancy
  By blushes yet untamed;
Age faithful to the mother's knee,
  Nor of her arms ashamed.

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
  As flowers, stand side by side;
Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
  The Christian of his pride:
Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
  Upon them not forlorn,
Though of a lineage once abhorred,
  Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
  Of poverty and wrong,
Doth here preserve a living light,
  From Hebrew fountains sprung;
That gives this ragged group to cast
  Around the dell a gleam
Of Palestine, of glory past,
  And proud Jerusalem!

1828

LI

ON THE POWER OF SOUND

ARGUMENT

The Ear addressed, as occupied by a spiritual functionary, in communion with sounds, individual, or combined in studied harmony.—Sources and effects of those sounds (to the close of 6th Stanza).—The power of music, whence proceeding, exemplified in the idiot.—Origin of music, and its effect in early ages—how produced (to the middle of 10th Stanza).—The mind recalled to sounds acting casually and severally.—Wish uttered (11th Stanza) that these could be united into a scheme or system for moral interests and intellectual contemplation.—(Stanza 12th) the Pythagorean theory of numbers and music, with their supposed power over the motions of the universe—imaginations consonant with such a theory.—Wish expressed (in 11th Stanza) realised, in some degree, by the representation of all sounds under the form of thanksgiving to the Creator.—(Last Stanza) the destruction of earth and the planetary system — the survival of audible harmony, and its support in the Divine Nature, as revealed in Holy Writ.

I

THY functions are ethereal,
As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,
Organ of vision! And a Spirit aërial
Informs the cell of Hearing, dark and blind;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
To enter than oracular cave;
Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,
And whispers for the heart, their slave;
And shrieks, that revel in abuse
Of shivering flesh; and warbled air,
Whose piercing sweetness can unloose
The chains of frenzy, or entice a smile
Into the ambush of despair;
Hosannas pealing down the long-drawn aisle,
And requiems answered by the pulse that beats
Devoutly, in life's last retreats!

II

The headlong streams and fountains
Serve Thee, invisible Spirit, with untired powers;
Cheering the wakeful tent on Syrian mountains,
They lull perchance ten thousand thousand flowers.
That roar, the prowling lion's *Here I am,*
How fearful to the desert wide!
That bleat, how tender! of the dam
Calling a straggler to her side.
Shout, cuckoo!—let the vernal soul
Go with thee to the frozen zone;
Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone bell-bird, toll
At the still hour to Mercy dear,
Mercy from her twilight throne
Listening to nun's faint throb of holy fear,
To sailor's prayer breathed from a darkening sea,
Or widow's cottage-lullaby.

III

Ye Voices, and ye Shadows
And Images of voice—to hound and horn
From rocky steep and rock-bestudded meadows
Flung back, and, in the sky's blue caves, reborn—
On with your pastime! till the church-tower bells
A greeting give of measured glee;
And milder echoes from their cells
Repeat the bridal symphony.

Then, or far earlier, let us rove
Where mists are breaking up or gone,
And from aloft look down into a cove
Besprinkled with a careless quire,
Happy milk-maids, one by one
Scattering a ditty each to her desire,
A liquid concert matchless by nice Art,
A stream as if from one full heart.

IV

Blest be the song that brightens
The blind man's gloom, exalts the veteran's mirth;
Unscorned the peasant's whistling breath, that lightens
His duteous toil of furrowing the green earth.
For the tired slave, Song lifts the languid oar,
And bids it aptly fall, with chime
That beautifies the fairest shore,
And mitigates the harshest clime.
Yon pilgrims see—in lagging file
They move; but soon the appointed way
A choral *Ave Marie* shall beguile,
And to their hope the distant shrine
Glisten with a livelier ray:
Nor friendless he, the prisoner of the mine,
Who from the well-spring of his own clear breast
Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

V

When civic renovation
Dawns on a kingdom, and for needful haste
Best eloquence avails not, Inspiration
Mounts with a tune, that travels like a blast
Piping through cave and battlemented tower;
Then starts the sluggard, pleased to meet
That voice of Freedom, in its power
Of promises, shrill, wild, and sweet!
Who, from a martial *pageant*, spreads
Incitements of a battle-day,
Thrilling the unweaponed crowd with plumeless heads?—
Even She whose Lydian airs inspire
Peaceful striving, gentle play
Of timid hope and innocent desire
Shot from the dancing Graces, as they move
Fanned by the plausive wings of Love.

VI

How oft along thy mazes,
Regent of sound, have dangerous Passions trod!
O Thou, through whom the temple rings with praises,
And blackening clouds in thunder speak of God,
Betray not by the cozenage of sense
Thy votaries, wooingly resigned
To a voluptuous influence
That taints the purer, better, mind;
But lead sick Fancy to a harp
That hath in noble tasks been tried;
And, if the virtuous feel a pang too sharp,
Soothe it into patience,—stay
The uplifted arm of Suicide;
And let some mood of thine in firm array
Knit every thought the impending issue needs,
Ere martyr burns, or patriot bleeds!

VII

As Conscience, to the centre
Of being, smites with irresistible pain,
So shall a solemn cadence, if it enter
The mouldy vaults of the dull idiot's brain,
Transmute him to a wretch from quiet hurled—
Convulsed as by a jarring din;
And then aghast, as at the world
Of reason partially let in
By concords winding with a sway
Terrible for sense and soul!
Or awed he weeps, struggling to quell dismay.
Point not these mysteries to an Art
Lodged above the starry pole;
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty, Truth
With Order dwell, in endless youth?

VIII

Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time.
Orphean Insight! truth's undaunted lover,
To the first leagues of tutored passion climb,
When Music deigned within this grosser sphere
Her subtle essence to enfold,
And voice and shell drew forth a tear
Softer than Nature's self could mould.

Yet *strenuous* was the infant Age:
Art, daring because souls could feel,
Stirred nowhere but an urgent equipage
Of rapt imagination sped her march
Through the realms of woe and weal:
Hell to the lyre bowed low; the upper arch
Rejoiced that clamorous spell and magic verse
Her wan disasters could disperse.

IX

The GIFT to king Amphion
That walled a city with its melody
Was for belief no dream:—thy skill, Arion!
Could humanise the creatures of the sea,
Where men were monsters. A last grace he craves,
Leave for one chant;—the dulcet sound
Steals from the deck o'er willing waves,
And listening dolphins gather round.
Self-cast, as with a desperate course,
'Mid that strange audience, he bestrides
A proud One docile as a managed horse;
And singing, while the accordant hand
Sweeps his harp, the Master rides;
So shall he touch at length a friendly strand,
And he, with his preserver, shine star-bright
In memory, through silent night.

X

The pipe of Pan, to shepherds
Couched in the shadow of Mænalian pines,
Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the leopards,
That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,
How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang!
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
In cadence,—and Silenus swang
This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned.
To life, to *life* give back thine ear:
Ye who are longing to be rid
Of fable, though to truth subservient, hear
The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell
Echoed from the coffin-lid;
The convict's summons in the steeple's knell;
'The vain distress-gun,' from a leeward shore,
Repeated—heard, and heard no more!

XI

For terror, joy, or pity,
Vast is the compass and the swell of notes:
From the babe's first cry to voice of regal city,
Rolling a solemn sea-like bass, that floats
Far as the woodlands—with the trill to blend
Of that shy songstress, whose love-tale
Might tempt an angel to descend,
While hovering o'er the moonlight vale.
Ye wandering Utterances, has earth no scheme,
No scale of moral music—to unite
Powers that survive but in the faintest dream
Of memory?—O that ye might stoop to bear
Chains, such precious chains of sight
As laboured minstrelsies through ages wear!
O for a balance fit the truth to tell
Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well!

XII

By one pervading spirit
Of tones and numbers all things are controlled,
As sages taught, where faith was found to merit
Initiation in that mystery old.
The heavens, whose aspect makes our minds as still
As they themselves appear to be,
Innumerable voices fill
With everlasting harmony;
The towering headlands, crowned with mist,
Their feet among the billows, know
That Ocean is a mighty harmonist;
Thy pinions, universal Air,
Ever waving to and fro,
Are delegates of harmony, and bear
Strains that support the Seasons in their round;
Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.

XIII

Break forth into thanksgiving,
Ye banded instruments of wind and chords;
Unite, to magnify the Ever-living,
Your inarticulate notes with the voice of words!
Nor hushed be service from the lowing mead,
Nor mute the forest hum of noon;
Thou too be heard, lone eagle! freed
From snowy peak and cloud, attune

Thy hungry barkings to the hymn
Of joy, that from her utmost walls
The six-days' Work by flaming Seraphim
Transmits to Heaven! As Deep to Deep
Shouting through one valley calls,
All worlds, all natures, mood and measure keep
For praise and ceaseless gratulation, poured
Into the ear of God, their Lord!

XIV

A Voice to Light gave Being;
To Time, and Man his earth-born chronicler;
A Voice shall finish doubt and dim foreseeing,
And sweep away life's visionary stir;
The trumpet (we, intoxicate with pride,
Arm at its blast for deadly wars)
To archangelic lips applied,
The grave shall open, quench the stars.
O Silence! are Man's noisy years
No more than moments of thy life?
Is Harmony, blest queen of smiles and tears,
With her smooth tones and discords just,
Tempered into rapturous strife,
Thy destined bond-slave? No! though earth be dust
And vanish, though the heavens dissolve, her stay
Is in the WORD, that shall not pass away.

1828-9

PETER BELL

A TALE

'What 's in a *Name*?
* * * * *
Brutus will start a Spirit as soon as Cæsar!'

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ., P.L., ETC. ETC.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The Tale of Peter Bell, which I now introduce to your notice, and to that of the Public, has, in its Manuscript state, nearly survived its *minority*:—for it first saw the light in the summer of 1798. During this long interval, pains have been taken at different times to make the production less unworthy of a favourable reception; or, rather, to fit it for filling *permanently* a station, however humble, in the Literature of our Country. This has, indeed, been the aim of all my endeavours in Poetry, which, you know, have been sufficiently laborious to prove that I deem the Art not lightly to be approached; and that the attainment of excellence in it may laudably be made the principal object of intellectual pursuit by any man, who, with reasonable consideration of circumstances, has faith in his own impulses.

The Poem of Peter Bell, as the Prologue will show, was composed under a belief that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life. Since that Prologue was written, *you* have exhibited most splendid effects of judicious daring, in the opposite and usual course. Let this acknowledgment make my peace with the lovers of the supernatural; and I am persuaded it will be admitted that to you, as a Master in that province of the art, the following Tale, whether from contrast or congruity, is not an unappropriate offering. Accept it, then, as a public testimony of affectionate admiration from one with whose name yours has been often coupled (to use your own words) for evil and for good; and believe me to be, with earnest wishes that life and health may be granted you to complete the many important works in which you are engaged, and with high respect,

Most faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

RYDAL MOUNT, *April* 7, 1819

PROLOGUE

THERE 'S something in a flying horse,
There 's something in a huge balloon;
But through the clouds I 'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
Shaped like the crescent-moon.

And now I *have* a little Boat,
In shape a very crescent-moon:
Fast through the clouds my Boat can sail;
But if perchance your faith should fail,
Look up—and you shall see me soon!

The woods, my Friends, are round you roaring,
Rocking and roaring like a sea;
The noise of danger's in your ears,
And ye have all a thousand fears
Both for my little Boat and me!

Meanwhile untroubled I admire
The pointed horns of my canoe;
And, did not pity touch my breast
To see how ye are all distrest,
Till my ribs ached I'd laugh at you!

Away we go, my Boat and I—
Frail man ne'er sate in such another;
Whether among the winds we strive,
Or deep into the clouds we dive,
Each is contented with the other.

Away we go—and what care we
For treasons, tumults, and for wars?
We are as calm in our delight
As is the crescent-moon so bright
Among the scattered stars.

Up goes my Boat among the stars
Through many a breathless field of light,
Through many a long blue field of ether,
Leaving ten thousand stars beneath her:
Up goes my little Boat so bright!

The Crab, the Scorpion, and the Bull—
We pry among them all; have shot
High o'er the red-haired race of Mars,
Covered from top to toe with scars;
Such company I like it not!

The towns in Saturn are decayed,
And melancholy Spectres throng them;—
The Pleiads, that appear to kiss
Each other in the vast abyss,
With joy I sail among them.

Swift Mercury resounds with mirth,
Great Jove is full of stately bowers;
But these, and all that they contain,
What are they to that tiny grain,
That little Earth of ours?

Then back to Earth, the dear green Earth:—
Whole ages if I here should roam,
The world for my remarks and me
Would not a whit the better be;
I 've left my heart at home.

See! there she is, the matchless Earth!
There spreads the famed Pacific Ocean!
Old Andes thrusts yon craggy spear
Through the grey clouds; the Alps are here,
Like waters in commotion!

Yon tawny slip is Libya's sands;
That silver thread the river Dnieper;
And look, where clothed in brightest green
Is a sweet Isle, of isles the Queen;
Ye fairies, from all evil keep her!

And see the town where I was born!
Around those happy fields we span
In boyish gambols;—I was lost
Where I have been, but on this coast
I feel I am a man.

Never did fifty things at once
Appear so lovely, never, never;—
How tunefully the forests ring!
To hear the earth's soft murmuring
Thus could I hang for ever!

'Shame on you!' cried my little Boat,
'Was ever such a homesick Loon,
Within a living Boat to sit,
And make no better use of it;
A Boat twin-sister of the crescent-moon!

'Ne'er in the breast of full-grown Poet
Fluttered so faint a heart before;—
Was it the music of the spheres
That overpowered your mortal ears?
—Such din shall trouble them no more.

'These nether precincts do not lack
Charms of their own;—then come with me—
I want a comrade, and for you
There 's nothing that I would not do;
Nought is there that you shall not see.

'Haste! and above Siberian snows
We 'll sport amid the boreal morning;
Will mingle with her lustres gliding
Among the stars, the stars now hiding,
And now the stars adorning.

'I know the secrets of a land
Where human foot did never stray;
Fair is that land as evening skies,
And cool, though in the depth it lies
Of burning Africa.

'Or we 'll into the realm of Faery,
Among the lovely shades of things;
The shadowy forms of mountains bare,
And streams, and bowers, and ladies fair,
The shades of palaces and kings!

'Or, if you thirst with hardy zeal
Less quiet regions to explore,
Prompt voyage shall to you reveal
How earth and heaven are taught to feel
The might of magic lore!'

'My little vagrant Form of light,
My gay and beautiful Canoe,
Well have you played your friendly part;
As kindly take what from my heart
Experience forces—then adieu!

'Temptation lurks among your words;
But, while these pleasures you 're pursuing
Without impediment or let,
No wonder if you quite forget
What on the earth is doing.

'There was a time when all mankind
Did listen with a faith sincere
To tuneful tongues in mystery versed;
Then Poets fearlessly rehearsed
The wonders of a wild career.

'Go—(but the world 's a sleepy world,
And 'tis, I fear, an age too late)
Take with you some ambitious Youth!
For, restless Wanderer! I, in truth,
Am all unfit to be your mate.

'Long have I loved what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers;
The common growth of mother-earth
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

'The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
I shall not covet for my dower,
If I along that lowly way
With sympathetic heart may stray,
And with a soul of power.

'These given, what more need I desire
To stir, to soothe, or elevate?
What nobler marvels than the mind
May in life's daily prospect find,
May find or there create?

'A potent wand doth Sorrow wield;
What spell so strong as guilty Fear!
Repentance is a tender Sprite;
If aught on earth have heavenly might,
'Tis lodged within her silent tear.

'But grant my wishes,—let us now
Descend from this ethereal height;
Then take thy way, adventurous Skiff,
More daring far than Hippogriff,
And be thy own delight!

'To the stone-table in my garden,
Loved haunt of many a summer hour,
The Squire is come: his daughter Bess
Beside him in the cool recess
Sits blooming like a flower.

'With these are many more convened;
They know not I have been so far;—
I see them there, in number nine,
Beneath the spreading Weymouth-pine!
I see them—there they are!

'There sits the Vicar and his Dame;
And there my good friend, Stephen Otter;
And, ere the light of evening fail,
To them I must relate the Tale
Of Peter Bell the Potter.'

Off flew the Boat—away she flees,
Spurning her freight with indignation!
And I, as well as I was able,
On two poor legs, toward my stone-table
Limped on with sore vexation.

'O, here he is!' cried little Bess—
She saw me at the garden-door;
'We've waited anxiously and long,'
They cried, and all around me throng,
Full nine of them or more!

'Reproach me not—your fears be still—
Be thankful we again have met;—
Resume, my Friends! within the shade
Your seats, and quickly shall be paid
The well-remembered debt.'

I spake with faltering voice, like one
Not wholly rescued from the pale
Of a wild dream, or worse illusion;
But straight, to cover my confusion,
Began the promised Tale.

PART FIRST

All by the moonlight river-side
Groaned the poor Beast—alas! in vain;
The staff was raised to loftier height,
And the blows fell with heavier weight
As Peter struck—and struck again.

'Hold!' cried the Squire, 'against the rules
Of common sense you're surely sinning;
This leap is for us all too bold;
Who Peter was, let that be told,
And start from the beginning.'

——'A Potter,[1] Sir, he was by trade,'
Said I, becoming quite collected;
'And wheresoever he appeared,
Full twenty times was Peter feared
For once that Peter was respected.

[1] In the dialect of the North, a hawker of earthenware is thus designated.

He, two-and-thirty years or more,
Had been a wild and woodland rover;
Had heard the Atlantic surges roar
On farthest Cornwall's rocky shore,
And trod the cliffs of Dover.

And he had seen Cærnarvon's towers,
And well he knew the spire of Sarum;
And he had been where Lincoln bell
Flings o'er the fen that ponderous knell—
A far-renowned alarum!

At Doncaster, at York, and Leeds,
And merry Carlisle had he been;
And all along the Lowlands fair,
All through the bonny shire of Ayr;
And far as Aberdeen.

And he had been at Inverness;
And Peter, by the mountain-rills,
Had danced his round with Highland lasses;
And he had lain beside his asses
On lofty Cheviot Hills:

And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
Among the rocks and winding *scars*;
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars:

And all along the indented coast,
Bespattered with the salt-sea foam;
Where'er a knot of houses lay
On headland, or in hollow bay;—
Sure never man like him did roam!

As well might Peter in the Fleet
Have been fast bound, a begging debtor;—
He travelled here, he travelled there;—
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.

He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day,—
But nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

Small change it made in Peter's heart
To see his gentle panniered train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.

In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

At noon, when, by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

On a fair prospect some have looked
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the scene
On which they gazed themselves away.

Within the breast of Peter Bell
These silent raptures found no place;
He was a Carl as wild and rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest far of all;—
He had a dozen wedded wives.

Nay, start not!—wedded wives—and twelve!
But how one wife could e'er come near him,
In simple truth I cannot tell;
For, be it said of Peter Bell,
To see him was to fear him.

Though Nature could not touch his heart
By lovely forms, and silent weather,
And tender sounds, yet you might see
At once that Peter Bell and she
Had often been together.

A savage wildness round him hung
As of a dweller out of doors;
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

To all the unshaped half-human thoughts
Which solitary Nature feeds
'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
Had Peter joined whatever vice
The cruel city breeds.

His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn-fence;
Of courage you saw little there,
But, in its stead, a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.

He had a dark and sidelong walk;
And long and slouching was his gait;
Beneath his looks so bare and bold,
You might perceive, his spirit cold
Was playing with some inward bait.

His forehead wrinkled was and furred;
A work, one half of which was done
By thinking of his "*whens*" and "*hows*";
And half, by knitting of his brows
Beneath the glaring sun.

There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye,
As if the man had fixed his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky!'

One night, (and now, my little Bess!
We've reached at last the promised Tale;)
One beautiful November night,
When the full moon was shining bright
Upon the rapid river Swale,

Along the river's winding banks
Peter was travelling all alone;—
Whether to buy or sell, or led
By pleasure running in his head,
To me was never known.

He trudged along through copse and brake,
He trudged along o'er hill and dale;
Nor for the moon cared he a tittle,
And for the stars he cared as little,
And for the murmuring river Swale.

But, chancing to espy a path
That promised to cut short the way;
As many a wiser man hath done,
He left a trusty guide for one
That might his steps betray.

To a thick wood he soon is brought
Where cheerily his course he weaves,
And whistling loud may yet be heard,
Though often buried, like a bird
Darkling, among the boughs and leaves.

But quickly Peter's mood is changed,
And on he drives with cheeks that burn
In downright fury and in wrath;—
There's little sign the treacherous path
Will to the road return!

The path grows dim, and dimmer still;
Now up, now down, the Rover wends,
With all the sail that he can carry,
Till brought to a deserted quarry—
And there the pathway ends.

He paused—for shadows of strange shape,
Massy and black, before him lay;
But through the dark, and through the cold,
And through the yawning fissures old,
Did Peter boldly press his way

Right through the quarry;—and behold
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue and grey, and tender green,
Together make as sweet a scene
As ever human eye did view.

Beneath the clear blue sky he saw
A little field of meadow ground;
But field or meadow name it not;
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompassed round.

The Swale flowed under the grey rocks,
But he flowed quiet and unseen:—
You need a strong and stormy gale
To bring the noises of the Swale
To that green spot, so calm and green!

And is there no one dwelling here,
No hermit with his beads and glass?
And does no little cottage look
Upon this soft and fertile nook?
Does no one live near this green grass?

Across the deep and quiet spot
Is Peter driving through the grass—
And now has reached the skirting trees;
When, turning round his head, he sees
A solitary Ass.

'A prize!' cries Peter—but he first
Must spy about him far and near:
There 's not a single house in sight,
No woodman's hut, nor cottage light—
Peter, you need not fear!

There 's nothing to be seen but woods,
And rocks that spread a hoary gleam,
And this one Beast, that from the bed
Of the green meadow hangs his head
Over the silent stream.

His head is with a halter bound;
The halter seizing, Peter leapt
Upon the Creature's back, and plied
With ready heels his shaggy side;
But still the Ass his station kept.

Then Peter gave a sudden jerk,
A jerk that from a dungeon-floor
Would have pulled up an iron ring;
But still the heavy-headed Thing
Stood just as he had stood before!

Quoth Peter, leaping from his seat,
'There is some plot against me laid';
Once more the little meadow-ground
And all the hoary cliffs around
He cautiously surveyed.

All, all is silent—rocks and woods,
All still and silent—far and near!
Only the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear.

Thought Peter, What can mean all this?
Some ugly witchcraft must be here!
—Once more the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turned round his long left ear.

Suspicion ripened into dread;
Yet, with deliberate action slow,
His staff high-raising, in the pride
Of skill, upon the sounding hide
He dealt a sturdy blow.

The poor Ass staggered with the shock;
And then, as if to take his ease,
In quiet uncomplaining mood,
Upon the spot where he had stood,
Dropped gently down upon his knees;

As gently on his side he fell;
And by the river's brink did lie;
And, while he lay like one that mourned,
The patient Beast on Peter turned
His shining hazel eye.

'Twas but one mild, reproachful look,
A look more tender than severe;
And straight in sorrow, not in dread,
He turned the eye-ball in his head
Towards the smooth river deep and clear.

Upon the Beast the sapling rings;
His lank sides heaved, his limbs they stirred;
He gave a groan, and then another,
Of that which went before the brother,
And then he gave a third.

All by the moonlight river side
He gave three miserable groans;
And not till now hath Peter seen
How gaunt the Creature is,—how lean
And sharp his staring bones!

With legs stretched out and stiff he lay:—
No word of kind commiseration
Fell at the sight from Peter's tongue;
With hard contempt his heart was wrung,
With hatred and vexation.

The meagre beast lay still as death;
And Peter's lips with fury quiver;
Quoth he, 'You little mulish dog,
I'll fling your carcass like a log
Head-foremost down the river!'

An impious oath confirmed the threat—
Whereat from the earth on which he lay
To all the echoes, south and north,
And east and west, the Ass sent forth
A long and clamorous bray!

This outcry, on the heart of Peter,
Seems like a note of joy to strike,—
Joy at the heart of Peter knocks;
But in the echo of the rocks
Was something Peter did not like.

Whether to cheer his coward breast,
Or that he could not break the chain,
In this serene and solemn hour,
Twined round him by demoniac power,
To the blind work he turned again.

Among the rocks and winding crags;
Among the mountains far away;
Once more the Ass did lengthen out
More ruefully a deep-drawn shout,
The hard dry see-saw of his horrible bray!

What is there now in Peter's heart?
Or whence the might of this strange sound?
The moon uneasy looked and dimmer,
The broad blue heavens appeared to glimmer,
And the rocks staggered all around—

From Peter's hand the sapling dropped!
Threat has he none to execute;
'If any one should come and see
That I am here, they 'll think,' quoth he,
'I 'm helping this poor dying brute.'

He scans the Ass from limb to limb,
And ventures now to uplift his eyes;
More steady looks the moon, and clear,
More like themselves the rocks appear
And touch more quiet skies.

His scorn returns—his hate revives;
He stoops the Ass's neck to seize
With malice—that again takes flight;
For in the pool a startling sight
Meets him, among the inverted trees.

Is it the moon's distorted face?
The ghost-like image of a cloud?
Is it a gallows there portrayed?
Is Peter of himself afraid?
Is it a coffin,—or a shroud?

A grisly idol hewn in stone?
Or imp from witch's lap let fall?
Perhaps a ring of shining fairies?
Such as pursue their feared vagaries
In sylvan bower, or haunted hall?

Is it a fiend that to a stake
Of fire his desperate self is tethering?
Or stubborn spirit doomed to yell
In solitary ward or cell,
Ten thousand miles from all his brethren?

Never did pulse so quickly throb,
And never heart so loudly panted;
He looks, he cannot choose but look;
Like some one reading in a book—
A book that is enchanted.

Ah, well-a-day for Peter Bell!
He will be turned to iron soon,
Meet Statue for the court of Fear!
His hat is up—and every hair
Bristles, and whitens in the moon!

He looks, he ponders, looks again;
He sees a motion—hears a groan;
His eyes will burst—his heart will break—
He gives a loud and frightful shriek,
And back he falls, as if his life were flown!

PART SECOND

We left our Hero in a trance,
Beneath the alders, near the river;
The Ass is by the river-side,
And, where the feeble breezes glide,
Upon the stream the moonbeams quiver.

A happy respite! but at length
He feels the glimmering of the moon;
Wakes with glazed eye, and feebly sighing—
To sink, perhaps, where he is lying,
Into a second swoon!

He lifts his head, he sees his staff;
He touches—'tis to him a treasure!
Faint recollection seems to tell
That he is yet where mortals dwell—
A thought received with languid pleasure!

His head upon his elbow propped,
Becoming less and less perplexed,
Sky-ward he looks—to rock and wood—
And then—upon the glassy flood
His wandering eye is fixed.

Thought he, that is the face of one
In his last sleep securely bound!
So toward the stream his head he bent,
And downward thrust his staff, intent
The river's depth to sound.

Now—like a tempest-shattered bark,
That overwhelmed and prostrate lies,
And in a moment to the verge
Is lifted of a foaming surge—
Full suddenly the Ass doth rise!

His staring bones all shake with joy,
And close by Peter's side he stands:
While Peter o'er the river bends,
The little Ass his neck extends,
And fondly licks his hands.

Such life is in the Ass's eyes,
Such life is in his limbs and ears;
That Peter Bell, if he had been
The veriest coward ever seen,
Must now have thrown aside his fears.

The Ass looks on—and to his work
Is Peter quietly resigned;
He touches here—he touches there—
And now among the dead man's hair
His sapling Peter has entwined.

He pulls—and looks—and pulls again;
And he whom the poor Ass had lost,
The man who had been four days dead,
Head-foremost from the river's bed
Uprises like a ghost!

And Peter draws him to dry land;
And through the brain of Peter pass
Some poignant twitches, fast and faster;
'No doubt,' quoth he, 'he is the Master
Of this poor miserable Ass!'

The meagre shadow that looks on—
What would he now? what is he doing?
His sudden fit of joy is flown,—
He on his knees hath laid him down,
As if he were his grief renewing;

But no—that Peter on his back
Must mount, he shows well as he can:
Thought Peter then, come weal or woe,
I 'll do what he would have me do,
In pity to this poor drowned man.

With that resolve he boldly mounts
Upon the pleased and thankful Ass;
And then, without a moment's stay,
That earnest Creature turned away,
Leaving the body on the grass.

Intent upon his faithful watch,
The Beast four days and nights had past;
A sweeter meadow ne'er was seen,
And there the Ass four days had been,
Nor ever once did break his fast:

Yet firm his step, and stout his heart;
The mead is crossed—the quarry's mouth
Is reached; but there the trusty guide
Into a thicket turns aside,
And deftly ambles towards the south.

When hark a burst of doleful sound!
And Peter honestly might say,
The like came never to his ears,
Though he has been, full thirty years,
A rover—night and day!

'Tis not a plover of the moors,
'Tis not a bittern of the fen;
Nor can it be a barking fox,
Nor night-bird chambered in the rocks,
Nor wild-cat in a woody glen!

The Ass is startled—and stops short
Right in the middle of the thicket;
And Peter, wont to whistle loud
Whether alone or in a crowd,
Is silent as a silent cricket.

What ails you now, my little Bess?
Well may you tremble and look grave!
This cry—that rings along the wood,
This cry—that floats adown the flood,
Comes from the entrance of a cave:

I see a blooming Wood-boy there,
And if I had the power to say
How sorrowful the wanderer is,
Your heart would be as sad as his
Till you had kissed his tears away!

Grasping a hawthorn branch in hand,
All bright with berries ripe and red,
Into the cavern's mouth he peeps;
Thence back into the moonlight creeps;
Whom seeks he—whom?—the silent dead:

His father!—Him doth he require—
Him hath he sought with fruitless pains,
Among the rocks, behind the trees;
Now creeping on his hands and knees,
Now running o'er the open plains.

And hither is he come at last,
When he through such a day has gone,
By this dark cave to be distrest
Like a poor bird—her plundered nest
Hovering around with dolorous moan!

Of that intense and piercing cry
The listening Ass conjectures well;
Wild as it is, he there can read
Some intermingled notes that plead
With touches irresistible.

But Peter—when he saw the Ass
Not only stop but turn, and change
The cherished tenor of his pace
That lamentable cry to chase—
It wrought in him conviction strange;

A faith that, for the dead man's sake
And this poor slave who loved him well,
Vengeance upon his head will fall,
Some visitation worse than all
Which ever till this night befell.

Meanwhile the Ass to reach his home
Is striving stoutly as he may;
But, while he climbs the woody hill,
The cry grows weak—and weaker still;
And now at last it dies away.

So with his freight the Creature turns
Into a gloomy grove of beech,
Along the shade with footsteps true
Descending slowly, till the two
The open moonlight reach.

And there, along the narrow dell,
A fair smooth pathway you discern,
A length of green and open road—
As if it from a fountain flowed—
Winding away between the fern.

The rocks that tower on either side
Build up a wild fantastic scene;
Temples like those among the Hindoos,
And mosques, and spires, and abbey-windows,
And castles all with ivy green!

And while the Ass pursues his way
Along this solitary dell,
As pensively his steps advance,
The mosques and spires change countenance,
And look at Peter Bell!

That unintelligible cry
Hath left him high in preparation,—
Convinced that he, or soon or late,
This very night will meet his fate—
And so he sits in expectation!

The strenuous Animal hath clomb
With the green path; and now he wends
Where, shining like the smoothest sea,
In undisturbed immensity
A level plain extends.

But whence this faintly-rustling sound
By which the journeying pair are chased?
—A withered leaf is close behind,
Light plaything for the sportive wind
Upon that solitary waste.

When Peter spied the moving thing,
It only doubled his distress;
'Where there is not a bush or tree,
The very leaves they follow me—
So huge hath been my wickedness!'

To a close lane they now are come,
Where, as before, the enduring Ass
Moves on without a moment's stop,
Nor once turns round his head to crop
A bramble-leaf or blade of grass.

Between the hedges as they go,
The white dust sleeps upon the lane;
And Peter, ever and anon
Back-looking, sees, upon a stone,
Or in the dust, a crimson stain.

A stain—as of a drop of blood
By moonlight made more faint and wan;
Ha! why these sinkings of despair?
He knows not how the blood comes there—
And Peter is a wicked man.

At length he spies a bleeding wound,
Where he had struck the Ass's head;
He sees the blood, knows what it is,—
A glimpse of sudden joy was his,
But then it quickly fled;

Of him whom sudden death had seized
He thought,—of thee, O faithful Ass!
And once again those ghastly pains
Shoot to and fro through heart and reins,
And through his brain like lightning pass.

PART THIRD

I 've heard of one, a gentle Soul,
Though given to sadness and to gloom,
And for the fact will vouch,—one night
It chanced that by a taper's light
This man was reading in his room;

Bending, as you or I might bend
At night o'er any pious book,
When sudden blackness overspread
The snow-white page on which he read,
And made the good man round him look.

The chamber walls were dark all round,—
And to his book he turned again;
—The light had left the lonely taper,
And formed itself upon the paper
Into large letters—bright and plain!

The godly book was in his hand—
And on the page, more black than coal,
Appeared, set forth in strange array,
A *word*—which to his dying day
Perplexed the good man's gentle soul.

The ghostly word, thus plainly seen,
Did never from his lips depart;
But he hath said, poor gentle wight!
It brought full many a sin to light
Out of the bottom of his heart.

Dread Spirits! to confound the meek
Why wander from your course so far,
Disordering colour, form, and stature!
—Let good men feel the soul of nature,
And see things as they are.

Yet, potent Spirits! well I know,
How ye, that play with soul and sense,
Are not unused to trouble friends
Of goodness, for most gracious ends—
And this I speak in reverence!

But might I give advice to you,
Whom in my fear I love so well;
From men of pensive virtue go,
Dread Beings! and your empire show
On hearts like that of Peter Bell.

Your presence often have I felt
In darkness and the stormy night;
And with like force, if need there be,
Ye can put forth your agency
When earth is calm, and heaven is bright.

Then, coming from the wayward world,
That powerful world in which ye dwell,
Come, Spirits of the Mind! and try,
To-night, beneath the moonlight sky,
What may be done with Peter Bell!

—O, would that some more skilful voice
My further labour might prevent!
Kind Listeners, that around me sit,
I feel that I am all unfit
For such high argument.

I 've played, I 've danced, with my narration;
I loitered long ere I began:
Ye waited then on my good pleasure;
Pour out indulgence still, in measure
As liberal as ye can!

Our Travellers, ye remember well,
Are thridding a sequestered lane;
And Peter many tricks is trying,
And many anodynes applying,
To ease his conscience of its pain.

By this his heart is lighter far;
And, finding that he can account
So snugly for that crimson stain,
His evil spirit up again
Does like an empty bucket mount.

And Peter is a deep logician
Who hath no lack of wit mercurial;
'Blood drops—leaves rustle—yet,' quoth he,
'This poor man never but for me
Could have had Christian burial.

'And, say the best you can, 'tis plain,
That here has been some wicked dealing;
No doubt the devil in me wrought;
I 'm not the man who could have thought
An Ass like this was worth the stealing!'

So from his pocket Peter takes
His shining horn tobacco-box;
And in a light and careless way,
As men who with their purpose play,
Upon the lid he knocks.

Let them whose voice can stop the clouds,
Whose cunning eye can see the wind,
Tell to a curious world the cause
Why, making here a sudden pause,
The Ass turned round his head, and *grinned.*

Appalling process! I have marked
The like on heath, in lonely wood;
And, verily, have seldom met
A spectacle more hideous—yet
It suited Peter's present mood.

And, grinning in his turn, his teeth
He in jocose defiance showed—
When, to upset his spiteful mirth,
A murmur, pent within the earth,
In the dead earth beneath the road,

Rolled audibly!—it swept along,
A muffled noise—a rumbling sound!—
'Twas by a troop of miners made,
Plying with gunpowder their trade,
Some twenty fathoms under ground.

Small cause of dire effect! for, surely,
If ever mortal, King or Cotter,
Believed that earth was charged to quake
And yawn for his unworthy sake,
'Twas Peter Bell the Potter.

But as an oak in breathless air
Will stand though to the centre hewn;
Or as the weakest things, if frost
Have stiffened them, maintain their post;
So he, beneath the gazing moon!—

The Beast bestriding thus, he reached
A spot where, in a sheltering cove,
A little chapel stands alone,
With greenest ivy overgrown,
And tufted with an ivy grove;

Dying insensibly away
From human thoughts and purposes,
It seemed—wall, window, roof and tower—
To bow to some transforming power,
And blend with the surrounding trees.

As ruinous a place it was,
Thought Peter, in the shire of Fife
That served my turn, when following still
From land to land a reckless will
I married my sixth wife!

The unheeding Ass moves slowly on,
And now is passing by an inn
Brim-full of a carousing crew,
That make, with curses not a few,
An uproar and a drunken din.

I cannot well express the thoughts
Which Peter in those noises found;—
A stifling power compressed his frame,
While-as a swimming darkness came
Over that dull and dreary sound.

For well did Peter know the sound;
The language of those drunken joys
To him, a jovial soul, I ween,
But a few hours ago, had been
A gladsome and a welcome noise.

Now, turned adrift into the past,
He finds no solace in his course;
Like planet-stricken men of yore,
He trembles, smitten to the core
By strong compunction and remorse.

But, more than all, his heart is stung
To think of one, almost a child;
A sweet and playful Highland girl,
As light and beauteous as a squirrel,
As beauteous and as wild!

Her dwelling was a lonely house,
A cottage in a heathy dell;
And she put on her gown of green,
And left her mother at sixteen,
And followed Peter Bell.

But many good and pious thoughts
Had she; and, in the kirk to pray,
Two long Scotch miles, through rain or snow,
To kirk she had been used to go,
Twice every Sabbath-day.

And, when she followed Peter Bell,
It was to lead an honest life;
For he, with tongue not used to falter,
Had pledged his troth before the altar
To love her as his wedded wife.

A mother's hope is hers;—but soon
She drooped and pined like one forlorn;
From Scripture she a name did borrow;
Benoni, or the child of sorrow,
She called her babe unborn.

For she had learned how Peter lived,
And took it in most grievous part;
She to the very bone was worn,
And, ere that little child was born,
Died of a broken heart.

And now the Spirits of the Mind
Are busy with poor Peter Bell;
Upon the rights of visual sense
Usurping, with a prevalence
More terrible than magic spell.

Close by a brake of flowering furze
(Above it shivering aspens play)
He sees an unsubstantial creature,
His very self in form and feature,
Not four yards from the broad highway:

And stretched beneath the furze he sees
The Highland girl—it is no other;
And hears her crying as she cried,
The very moment that she died,
'My mother! oh my mother!'

The sweat pours down from Peter's face,
So grievous is his heart's contrition;
With agony his eye-balls ache
While he beholds by the furze-brake
This miserable vision!

Calm is the well-deserving brute,
His peace hath no offence betrayed;
But now, while down that slope he wends,
A voice to Peter's ear ascends,
Resounding from the woody glade:

The voice, though clamorous as a horn
Re-echoed by a naked rock,
Comes from that tabernacle—List!
Within, a fervent Methodist
Is preaching to no heedless flock!

'Repent! repent!' he cries aloud,
'While yet ye may find mercy;—strive
To love the Lord with all your might;
Turn to him, seek him day and night,
And save your souls alive!

'Repent! repent! though ye have gone,
Through paths of wickedness and woe,
After the Babylonian harlot;
And though your sins be red as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow!'

Even as he passed the door, these words
Did plainly come to Peter's ears;
And they such joyful tidings were,
The joy was more than he could bear!—
He melted into tears.

Sweet tears of hope and tenderness!
And fast they fell, a plenteous shower!
His nerves, his sinews seemed to melt;
Through all his iron frame was felt
A gentle, a relaxing, power!

Each fibre of his frame was weak;
Weak all the animal within;
But, in its helplessness, grew mild
And gentle as an infant child,
An infant that has known no sin.

'Tis said, meek Beast! that, through Heaven's grace,
He not unmoved did notice now
The cross upon thy shoulder scored,
For lasting impress, by the Lord
To whom all human-kind shall bow;

Memorial of his touch—that day
When Jesus humbly deigned to ride,
Entering the proud Jerusalem,
By an immeasurable stream
Of shouting people deified!

Meanwhile the persevering Ass
Turned towards a gate that hung in view
Across a shady lane; his chest
Against the yielding gate he pressed
And quietly passed through.

And up the stony lane he goes;
No ghost more softly ever trod;
Among the stones and pebbles he
Sets down his hoofs inaudibly,
As if with felt his hoofs were shod.

Along the lane the trusty Ass
Went twice two hundred yards or more,
And no one could have guessed his aim,—
Till to a lonely house he came,
And stopped beside the door.

Thought Peter, 'tis the poor man's home!
He listens—not a sound is heard
Save from the trickling household rill;
But, stepping o'er the cottage-sill,
Forthwith a little Girl appeared.

She to the Meeting-house was bound
In hopes some tidings there to gather:
No glimpse it is, no doubtful gleam;
She saw—and uttered with a scream,
'My father! here's my father!'

The very word was plainly heard,
Heard plainly by the wretched Mother—
Her joy was like a deep affright:
And forth she rushed into the light,
And saw it was another!

And instantly upon the earth,
Beneath the full moon shining bright,
Close to the Ass's feet she fell;
At the same moment Peter Bell
Dismounts in most unhappy plight.

As he beheld the Woman lie
Breathless and motionless, the mind
Of Peter sadly was confused;
But, though to such demands unused,
And helpless almost as the blind,

He raised her up; and while he held
Her body propped against his knee,
The Woman waked—and when she spied
The poor Ass standing by her side,
She moaned most bitterly.

'Oh! God be praised—my heart's at ease—
For he is dead—I know it well!'
—At this she wept a bitter flood;
And, in the best way that he could,
His tale did Peter tell.

He trembles—he is pale as death;
His voice is weak with perturbation;
He turns aside his head, he pauses;
Poor Peter from a thousand causes
Is crippled sore in his narration.

At length she learned how he espied
The Ass in that small meadow-ground;
And that her Husband now lay dead,
Beside that luckless river's bed
In which he had been drowned.

A piercing look the Widow cast
Upon the Beast that near her stands;
She sees 'tis he, that 'tis the same;
She calls the poor Ass by his name,
And wrings, and wrings her hands·

'O wretched loss—untimely stroke!
If he had died upon his bed!
He knew not one forewarning pain;
He never will come home again—
Is dead, for ever dead!'

Beside the Woman Peter stands;
His heart is opening more and more;
A holy sense pervades his mind;
He feels what he for human-kind
Has never felt before.

At length, by Peter's arm sustained,
The Woman rises from the ground—
'Oh, mercy! something must be done,
My little Rachel, you must run,—
Some willing neighbour must be found.

'Make haste—my little Rachel—do,
The first you meet with—bid him come,
Ask him to lend his horse to-night,
And this good Man, whom Heaven requite,
Will help to bring the body home.'

Away goes Rachel weeping loud;—
An Infant, waked by her distress,
Makes in the house a piteous cry;
And Peter hears the Mother sigh,
'Seven are they, and all fatherless!'

And now is Peter taught to feel
That man's heart is a holy thing;
And Nature, through a world of death,
Breathes into him a second breath,
More searching than the breath of spring.

Upon a stone the Woman sits
In agony of silent grief—
From his own thoughts did Peter start;
He longs to press her to his heart,
From love that cannot find relief.

But roused, as if through every limb
Had past a sudden shock of dread,
The Mother o'er the threshold flies,
And up the cottage stairs she hies,
And on the pillow lays her burning head.

And Peter turns his steps aside
Into a shade of darksome trees,
Where he sits down, he knows not how,
With his hands pressed against his brow,
His elbows on his tremulous knees.

There, self-involved, does Peter sit
Until no sign of life he makes,
As if his mind were sinking deep
Through years that have been long asleep!
The trance is passed away—he wakes;

He lifts his head—and sees the Ass
Yet standing in the clear moonshine;
'When shall I be as good as thou?
Oh! would, poor beast, that I had now
A heart but half as good as thine!'

But *He*—who deviously hath sought
His Father through the lonesome woods,
Hath sought, proclaiming to the ear
Of night his grief and sorrowful fear—
He comes, escaped from fields and floods;—

With weary pace is drawing nigh;
He sees the Ass—and nothing living
Had ever such a fit of joy
As hath this little orphan Boy,
For he has no misgiving!

Forth to the gentle Ass he springs,
And up about his neck he climbs;
In loving words he talks to him,
He kisses, kisses face and limb,—
He kisses him a thousand times!

This Peter sees, while in the shade
He stood beside the cottage-door;
And Peter Bell, the ruffian wild,
Sobs loud, he sobs even like a child,
'Oh! God, I can endure no more!'

—Here ends my Tale: for in a trice
Arrived a neighbour with his horse;
Peter went forth with him straightway;
And, with due care, ere break of day,
Together they brought back the Corse.

And many years did this poor Ass,
Whom once it was my luck to see
Cropping the shrubs of Leming-Lane,
Help by his labour to maintain
The Widow and her family.

And Peter Bell, who, till that night,
Had been the wildest of his clan,
Forsook his crimes, renounced his folly,
And, after ten months' melancholy,
Became a good and honest man.

1798

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

DEDICATION

TO ——

HAPPY the feeling from the bosom thrown
In perfect shape (whose beauty Time shall spare
Though a breath made it) like a bubble blown
For summer pastime into wanton air;
Happy the thought best likened to a stone
Of the sea-beach, when, polished with nice care,
Veins it discovers exquisite and rare,
Which for the loss of that moist gleam atone
That tempted first to gather it. That here,
O chief of Friends! such feelings I present,
To thy regard, with thoughts so fortunate,
Were a vain notion; but the hope is dear,
That thou, if not with partial joy elate,
Wilt smile upon this gift with more than mild content!

Published 1827

PART I

I

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

Published 1807

II

ADMONITION

INTENDED more particularly for the perusal of those who may have happened to be enamoured of some beautiful place of Retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.

WELL may'st thou halt—and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode;—forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the Home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants!—Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away.

Published 1807

III

'BELOVED Vale!' I said, 'when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one.'
But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none.
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crost
I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small!
A Juggler's balls old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

Published 1807

IV

AT APPLETHWAITE, NEAR KESWICK

BEAUMONT! it was thy wish that I should rear
A seemly Cottage in this sunny Dell,
On favoured ground, thy gift, where I might dwell
In neighbourhood with One to me most dear,
That undivided we from year to year
Might work in our high Calling—a bright hope
To which our fancies, mingling, gave free scope
Till checked by some necessities severe.
And should these slacken, honoured BEAUMONT! still
Even then we may perhaps in vain implore
Leave of our fate thy wishes to fulfil.
Whether this boon be granted us or not,
Old Skiddaw will look down upon the Spot
With pride, the Muses love it evermore.

1804

V

PELION and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled:
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold;
And that inspiring Hill, which 'did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,'
Shines with poetic radiance as of old;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds:
What was the great Parnassus' self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

1801

VI

THERE is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among Men or Naiads sought
Notice or name!—It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will;
Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is brought
Oftener than Ganges or the Nile; a thought
Of private recollection sweet and still!

Months perish with their moons; year treads on year;
But, faithful Emma! thou with me canst say
That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear,
And flies their memory fast almost as they;
The immortal Spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.

Published 1820

VII

HER only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied;
With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at her side,
And the glad Muse at liberty to note
All that to each is precious, as we float
Gently along; regardless who shall chide
If the heavens smile, and leave us free to glide,
Happy Associates breathing air remote
From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the Muse,
Why have I crowded this small bark with you
And others of your kind, ideal crew!
While here sits One whose brightness owes its hues
To flesh and blood; no Goddess from above,
No fleeting Spirit, but my own true Love?

Published 1827

VIII

THE fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
Such strains of rapture as[1] the Genius played
In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high;
He who stood visible to Mirza's eye,
Never before to human sight betrayed.
Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
The visionary Arches are not there,
Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas;
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

Published 1815

[1] See the 'Vision of Mirza' in the *Spectator*.

IX

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE,

Painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.

PRAISED be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing Art! whom Morning, Noon-tide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

August 1811

X

'WHY, Minstrel, these untuneful murmurings—
Dull, flagging notes that with each other jar?'
'Think, gentle Lady, of a Harp so far
From its own country, and forgive the strings.'
A simple answer! but even so forth springs,
From the Castalian fountain of the heart,
The Poetry of Life, and all *that* Art
Divine of words quickening insensate things.
From the submissive necks of guiltless men
Stretched on the block the glittering axe recoils;
Sun, moon, and stars, all struggle in the toils
Of mortal sympathy; what wonder then
That the poor Harp distempered music yields
To its sad Lord, far from his native fields?

Published 1827

XI

AËRIAL Rock—whose solitary brow
From this low threshold daily meets my sight;
When I step forth to hail the morning light;
Or quit the stars with a lingering farewell—how
Shall Fancy pay to thee a grateful vow?
How, with the Muse's aid, her love attest?
—By planting on thy naked head the crest
Of an imperial Castle, which the plough

Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme!
That doth presume no more than to supply
A grace the sinuous vale and roaring stream
Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
Rise, then, ye votive Towers! and catch a gleam
Of golden sunset, ere it fade and die.

Published 1819

XII

TO SLEEP

O GENTLE Sleep! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child:
Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

Published 1807

XIII

TO SLEEP

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names;
The very sweetest, Fancy culls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!

Published 1807

XIV

TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

Published 1807

XV

THE WILD DUCK'S NEST

THE imperial Consort of the Fairy-king
Owns not a sylvan bower; or gorgeous cell
With emerald floored, and with purpureal shell
Ceilinged and roofed; that is so fair a thing
As this low structure, for the tasks of Spring
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell;
And spreads in steadfast peace her brooding wing.
Words cannot paint the o'ershadowing yew-tree bough,
And dimly-gleaming Nest,—a hollow crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow:
I gazed—and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
For human-kind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride!

Published 1819

XVI

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN 'THE COMPLETE ANGLER'

WHILE flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live the name of Walton: Sage benign!
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort

To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline,
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook;—
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
The cowslip-bank and shady willow-tree,
And the fresh meads—where flowed, from every nook
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety!

Published 1819

XVII

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER

BARD of the Fleece, whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood strayed,
Those southern tracts of Cambria, 'deep embayed,
With green hills fenced, with ocean's murmur lulled';
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet culled
For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay,
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aërial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill!

1811

XVIII

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE PUBLICATION OF A CERTAIN POEM

See Milton's Sonnet, beginning, 'A Book was writ of late called "Tetrachordon."'

A BOOK came forth of late, called PETER BELL;
Not negligent the style;—the matter?—good
As aught that song records of Robin Hood;
Or Roy, renowned through many a Scottish dell;
But some (who brook those hackneyed themes full well,
Nor heat, at Tam o' Shanter's name, their blood)
Waxed wroth, and with foul claws, a harpy brood,
On Bard and Hero clamorously fell.

Heed not, wild Rover once through heath and glen,
Who mad'st at length the better life thy choice,
Heed not such onset! nay, if praise of men
To thee appear not an unmeaning voice,
Lift up that grey-haired forehead, and rejoice
In the just tribute of thy Poet's pen!

1820

XIX

GRIEF, thou hast lost an ever-ready friend
Now that the cottage Spinning-wheel is mute;
And Care—a comforter that best could suit
Her froward mood, and softliest reprehend;
And Love—a charmer's voice, that used to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows
From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse—else troubled without end:
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving truce and rest
From her own overflow, what power sedate
On those revolving motions did await
Assiduously—to soothe her aching breast;
And, to a point of just relief, abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.

Published 1819

XX

TO S. H.

EXCUSE is needless when with love sincere
Of occupation, not by fashion led,
Thou turn'st the Wheel that slept with dust o'erspread;
My nerves from no such murmur shrink,—tho' near,
Soft as the Dorhawk's to a distant ear,
When twilight shades darken the mountain's head.
Even She who toils to spin our vital thread
Might smile on work, O Lady, once so dear
To household virtues. Venerable Art,
Torn from the Poor! yet shall kind Heaven protect
Its own; though Rulers, with undue respect,
Trusting to crowded factory and mart
And proud discoveries of the intellect,
Heed not the pillage of man's ancient heart.

Published 1827

XXI

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE VALLEYS OF WESTMORELAND, ON EASTER SUNDAY

WITH each recurrence of this glorious morn
That saw the Saviour in his human frame
Rise from the dead, erewhile the Cottage-dame
Put on fresh raiment—till that hour unworn:
Domestic hands the home-bred wool had shorn,
And she who span it culled the daintiest fleece,
In thoughtful reverence to the Prince of Peace,
Whose temples bled beneath the platted thorn.
A blest estate when piety sublime
These humble props disdained not! O green dales!
Sad may *I* be who heard your Sabbath chime
When Art's abused inventions were unknown;
Kind Nature's various wealth was all your own;
And benefits were weighed in Reason's scales!

Published 1819

XXII

DECAY OF PIETY

OFT have I seen, ere Time had ploughed my cheek,
Matrons and Sires—who, punctual to the call
Of their loved Church, on fast or festival
Through the long year the House of Prayer would seek:
By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
Of Easter winds, unscared, from hut or hall
They came to lowly bench or sculptured stall,
But with one fervour of devotion meek.
I see the places where they once were known,
And ask, surrounded even by kneeling crowds,
Is ancient Piety for ever flown?
Alas! even then they seemed like fleecy clouds
That, struggling through the western sky, have won
Their pensive light from a departed sun!

Published 1827

XXIII

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND IN THE VALE OF GRASMERE, 1812

WHAT need of clamorous bells, or ribands gay,
These humble nuptials to proclaim or grace?
Angels of love, look down upon the place;
Shed on the chosen vale a sun-bright day!

Yet no proud gladness would the Bride display
Even for such promise:—serious is her face,
Modest her mien; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way
Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear;
No disproportion in her soul, no strife:
But, when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shown that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

Oct. 31, 1812

XXIV

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO

I

YES! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none finds grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But in chaste hearts, uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

1805

XXV

FROM THE SAME

II

NO mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold:
Heaven-born, the Soul a heavenward course must hold;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.

The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes: nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
That kills the soul: love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.

Probably 1805

XXVI

FROM THE SAME. TO THE SUPREME BEING

III

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
That quickens only where Thou say'st it may:
Unless Thou show to us thine own true way
No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.

1805

XXVII

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss!—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

Published 1815

XXVIII

I

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud—
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
'Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan.'
Those steps I clomb; the mists before me gave
Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!

Published 1807

XXIX

NOVEMBER, 1836

II

EVEN so for me a Vision sanctified
The sway of Death; long ere mine eyes had seen
Thy countenance—the still rapture of thy mien—
When thou, dear Sister! wert become Death's Bride:
No trace of pain or languor could abide
That change:—age on thy brow was smoothed—thy cold
Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
A loveliness to living youth denied.
Oh! if within me hope should e'er decline,
The lamp of faith, lost Friend! too faintly burn;
Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
The bright assurance, visibly return:
And let my spirit in that power divine
Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

XXX

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

1802

XXXI

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry?—Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

Published 1807

XXXII

WITH Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where She comes the winds must stir:
On went She, and due north her journey took.

Published 1807

XXXIII

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

Published 1807

XXXIV

AVOLANT Tribe of Bards on earth are found,
Who, while the flattering Zephyrs round them play,
On 'coignes of vantage' hang their nests of clay;
How quickly from that aery hold unbound,
Dust for oblivion! To the solid ground
Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye;
Convinced that there, there only, she can lay
Secure foundations. As the year runs round,
Apart she toils within the chosen ring;
While the stars shine, or while day's purple eye
Is gently closing with the flowers of spring;
Where even the motion of an Angel's wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.

Published 1823

XXXV

'WEAK is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe;—and joy, for human-kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!'
Thus might *he* paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.

Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined:
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

Published 1815

XXXVI

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT

CALVERT! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate;—
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived, Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

Published 1807

PART II

I

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

Published 1827

II

HOW sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in flocks;
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile pranks
At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks,—
When she stands cresting the Clown's head, and mocks
The crowd beneath her. Verily I think,
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.

Dec. 1806

III

TO B. R. HAYDON

HIGH is our calling, Friend!—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

Dec. 1815

IV

FROM the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, GILLIES, rise: the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a wingèd steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,

And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heavenward they direct.—Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's faded grove:
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

1814

V

FAIR Prime of life! were it enough to gild
With ready sunbeams every straggling shower;
And, if an unexpected cloud should lower,
Swiftly thereon a rainbow arch to build
For Fancy's errands,—then, from fields half-tilled
Gathering green weeds to mix with poppy flower,
Thee might thy Minions crown, and chant thy power,
Unpitied by the wise, all censure stilled.
Ah! show that worthier honours are thy due;
Fair Prime of life! arouse the deeper heart;
Confirm the Spirit glorying to pursue
Some path of steep ascent and lofty aim;
And, if there be a joy that slights the claim
Of grateful memory, bid that joy depart.

Published 1827

VI

I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly-sinking star—immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire!
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet—and yet;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns—transmuted to a dusky fire—
Then pays submissively the appointed debt
To the flying moments, and is seen no more.
Angels and gods! We struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, from their height decline,
Depressed; and then extinguished: and our state,
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore!

Published 1819

VII

I HEARD (alas! 'twas only in a dream)
Strains—which, as sage Antiquity believed,
By waking ears have sometimes been received
Wafted adown the wind from lake or stream;

A most melodious requiem, a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.
For is she not the votary of Apollo?
And knows she not, singing as he inspires,
That bliss awaits her which the ungenial Hollow[1]
Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires?
Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal quires!
She soared—and I awoke, struggling in vain to follow.

Published 1819

VIII

RETIREMENT

IF the whole weight of what we think and feel,
Save only far as thought and feeling blend
With action, were as nothing, patriot Friend!
From thy remonstrance would be no appeal;
But to promote and fortify the weal
Of her own Being is her paramount end;
A truth which they alone shall comprehend
Who shun the mischief which they cannot heal.
Peace in these feverish times is sovereign bliss:
Here, with no thirst but what the stream can slake,
And startled only by the rustling brake,
Cool air I breathe; while the unincumbered Mind,
By some weak aims at services assigned
To gentle Natures, thanks not Heaven amiss.

Published 1827

IX

NOT Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,
Nor Duty struggling with afflictions strange—
Not these *alone* inspire the tuneful shell;
But where untroubled peace and concord dwell,
There also is the Muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.
Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavour,
And sage content, and placid melancholy;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—
Diaphanous because it travels slowly;
Soft is the music that would charm for ever;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.

Published 1823

[1] See the *Phædon* of Plato, by which this Sonnet was suggested.

X

MARK the concentred hazels that enclose
Yon old grey Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns:—and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains.—Live, ye trees!
And thou, grey Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep:
For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

Published 1815

XI

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMBLETON HILLS, YORKSHIRE

DARK and more dark the shades of evening fell;
The wished-for point was reached—but at an hour
When little could be gained from that rich dower
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.
Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
Salute us; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
Substantially expressed—a place for bell
Or clock to toll from! Many a tempting isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
'Mid seas how steadfast! objects all for the eye
Of silent rapture; but we felt the while
We should forget them; they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

Oct. 4, 1802

XII

> -'they are of the sky,
> And from our earthly memory fade away.'

THOSE words were uttered as in pensive mood
We turned, departing from that solemn sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed!

But now upon this thought I cannot brood;
It is unstable as a dream of night;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.

Published 1807

XIII

SEPTEMBER, 1815

WHILE not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, 'Prepare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields.'
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

Dec. 1815

XIV

NOVEMBER 1

HOW clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head—
Terrestrial, but a surface by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aërial Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.

Dec. 1815

XV

COMPOSED DURING A STORM

ONE who was suffering tumult in his soul
Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer,
Went forth—his course surrendering to the care
Of the fierce wind, while mid-day lightnings prowl
Insidiously, untimely thunders growl;
While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers, tear
The lingering remnant of their yellow hair,
And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
As if the sun were not. He raised his eye
Soul-smitten; for, that instant, did appear
Large space ('mid dreadful clouds) of purest sky,
An azure disc—shield of Tranquillity;
Invisible, unlooked-for, minister
Of providential goodness ever nigh!

1819

XVI

TO A SNOWDROP

LONE Flower, hemmed in with snows, and white as they,
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, way-lay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

Published 1819

XVII

TO THE LADY MARY LOWTHER

WITH a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea; and extracts of similar character from other Writers; transcribed by a female friend.

LADY! I rifled a Parnassian Cave
(But seldom trod) of mildly-gleaming ore;
And culled, from sundry beds, a lucid store
Of genuine crystals, pure as those that pave

The azure brooks, where Dian joys to lave
Her spotless limbs; and ventured to explore
Dim shades—for reliques, upon Lethe's shore,
Cast up at random by the sullen wave.
To female hands the treasures were resigned;
And lo this Work!—a grotto bright and clear
From stain or taint; in which thy blameless mind
May feed on thoughts though pensive not austere;
Or, if thy deeper spirit be inclined
To holy musing, it may enter here.

1819

XVIII

TO LADY BEAUMONT

LADY! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs—to hang upon the warm alcove
And sheltering wall; and still, as Fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady! which your feet shall rove.
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

1807

XIX

THERE is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only Poets know;—'twas rightly said;
Whom could the Muses else allure to tread
Their smoothest paths, to wear their lightest chains?
When happiest Fancy has inspired the strains,
How oft the malice of one luckless word
Pursues the Enthusiast to the social board,
Haunts him belated on the silent plains!
Yet he repines not, if his thought stand clear,
At last, of hindrance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn;
Bright, speckless, as a softly-moulded tear
The moment it has left the virgin's eye,
Or rain-drop lingering on the pointed thorn.

Published 1827

XX

THE Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
'Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright!'
Forthwith that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered; dazzling the Beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparagèd.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it went;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured—content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

Published 1815

XXI

WHEN haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
Mature release, in fair society
Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try;
Like these frail snowdrops that together cling,
And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
Observe the faithful flowers! if small to great
May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate;
And so the bright immortal Theban band,
Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's command,
Might overwhelm, but could not separate!

Published 1820

XXII

HAIL, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions.—Ancient Power!
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower,
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower

Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The self-same Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power! brought forth;
These mighty barriers, and the gulf between;
The flood, the stars,—a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

Published 1815

XXIII

'WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
How silently, and with how wan a face!'
Where art thou? Thou so often seen on high
Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph's race!
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath 's a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
The northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurrying and sparkling through the clear blue heaven;
But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

Perhaps 1802

XXIV

EVEN as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Sullenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper 'mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:
The lake below reflects it not; the sky
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing;—or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

Published 1815

XXV

THE stars are mansions built by Nature's hand,
And, haply, there the spirits of the blest
Dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal vest;
Huge Ocean shows, within his yellow strand,

A habitation marvellously planned,
For life to occupy in love and rest;
All that we see—is dome, or vault, or nest,
Or fortress, reared at Nature's sage command.
Glad thought for every season! but the Spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,
'Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring;
And while the youthful year's prolific art—
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower—was fashioning
Abodes where self-disturbance hath no part.

Published 1820

XXVI

DESPONDING Father! mark this altered bough,
So beautiful of late, with sunshine warmed,
Or moist with dews; what more unsightly now,
Its blossoms shrivelled, and its fruit, if formed,
Invisible? yet Spring her genial brow
Knits not o'er that discolouring and decay
As false to expectation. Nor fret thou
At like unlovely process in the May
Of human life: a Stripling's graces blow,
Fade and are shed, that from their timely fall
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow
Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks shall call:
In all men, sinful is it to be slow
To hope—in Parents, sinful above all.

Published 1835

XXVII

CAPTIVITY.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

'AS the cold aspect of a sunless way
Strikes through the Traveller's frame with deadlier chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious hill,
Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never stray;
So joys, remembered without wish or will,
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill,—
On the crushed heart a heavier burthen lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my mind
To fit proportion with my altered state!
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Reflected in my bosom all too late!—
O be my spirit, like my thraldom, strait;
And, like mine eyes that stream with sorrow, blind!'

Published 1819

XXVIII

ST. CATHERINE OF LEDBURY

WHEN human touch (as monkish books attest)
Nor was applied nor could be, Ledbury bells
Broke forth in concert flung adown the dells,
And upward, high as Malvern's cloudy crest;
Sweet tones, and caught by a noble Lady blest
To rapture! Mabel listened at the side
Of her loved mistress: soon the music died,
And Catherine said, Here I set up my rest.
Warned in a dream, the Wanderer long had sought
A home that by such miracle of sound
Must be revealed:—she heard it now, or felt
The deep, deep joy of a confiding thought;
And there, a saintly Anchoress, she dwelt
Till she exchanged for heaven that happy ground.

Published 1835

XXIX

—— 'gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.'

THOUGH narrow be that old Man's cares, and near,
The poor old Man is greater than he seems:
For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer;
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never part,
Seen the Seven Whistlers in their nightly rounds,
And counted them: and oftentimes will start—
For overhead are sweeping Gabriel's Hounds
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aërial grounds!

Published 1807

XXX

FOUR fiery steeds impatient of the rein
Whirled us o'er sunless ground beneath a sky
As void of sunshine, when, from that wide plain,
Clear tops of far-off mountains we descry,

Like a Sierra of cerulean Spain,
All light and lustre. Did no heart reply?
Yes, there was One;—for One, asunder fly
The thousand links of that ethereal chain;
And green vales open out, with grove and field,
And the fair front of many a happy Home;
Such tempting spots as into vision come
While Soldiers, weary of the arms they wield,
And sick at heart of strifeful Christendom,
Gaze on the moon by parting clouds revealed.

1835

XXXI

BROOK! whose society the Poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks;
If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,
Channels for tears; no Naiad shouldst thou be,—
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints, nor hairs:
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a safer good;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

Published 1815

XXXII

COMPOSED ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM

DOGMATIC Teachers, of the snow-white fur!
Ye wrangling Schoolmen, of the scarlet hood!
Who, with a keenness not to be withstood,
Press the point home, or falter and demur,
Checked in your course by many a teasing burr;
These natural council-seats your acrid blood
Might cool;—and, as the Genius of the flood
Stoops willingly to animate and spur
Each lighter function slumbering in the brain,
Yon eddying balls of foam, these arrowy gleams
That o'er the pavement of the surging streams
Welter and flash, a synod might detain
With subtle speculations, haply vain,
But surely less so than your far-fetched themes!

Published 1820

XXXIII

THIS AND THE TWO FOLLOWING WERE SUGGESTED BY MR. W. WESTALL'S VIEWS OF THE CAVES, ETC., IN YORKSHIRE

PURE element of waters! wheresoe'er
Thou dost forsake thy subterranean haunts,
Green herbs, bright flowers, and berry-bearing plants,
Rise into life and in thy train appear:
And, through the sunny portion of the year,
Swift insects shine, thy hovering pursuivants:
And, if thy bounty fail, the forest pants;
And hart and hind and hunter with his spear
Languish and droop together. Nor unfelt
In man's perturbèd soul thy sway benign;
And, haply, far within the marble belt
Of central earth, where tortured Spirits pine
For grace and goodness lost, thy murmurs melt
Their anguish,—and they blend sweet songs with thine.[1]

1818

XXXIV

MALHAM COVE

WAS the aim frustrated by force or guile,
When giants scooped from out the rocky ground,
Tier under tier, this semicirque profound?
(Giants—the same who built in Erin's isle
That Causeway with incomparable toil!)—
Oh, had this vast theatric structure wound
With finished sweep into a perfect round,
No mightier work had gained the plausive smile
Of all-beholding Phœbus! But, alas,
Vain earth! false world! Foundations must be laid
In Heaven; for, 'mid the wreck of IS and WAS,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

1818

XXXV

GORDALE

AT early dawn, or rather when the air
Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy Eve
Is busiest to confer and to bereave;
Then, pensive Votary! let thy feet repair

[1] Waters (as Mr. Westall informs us in the letterpress prefixed to his admirable views) are invariably found to flow through these caverns.

To Gordale-chasm, terrific as the lair
Where the young lions couch; for so, by leave
Of the propitious hour, thou may'st perceive
The local Deity, with oozy hair
And mineral crown, beside his jagged urn,
Recumbent: Him thou may'st behold, who hides
His lineaments by day, yet there presides,
Teaching the docile waters how to turn,
Or (if need be) impediment to spurn,
And force their passage to the salt-sea tides!

1818

XXXVI

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER *3*, 1802

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

XXXVII

CONCLUSION

TO ——

IF these brief Records, by the Muses' art
Produced as lonely Nature or the strife
That animates the scenes of public life[1]
Inspired, may in thy leisure claim a part;
And if these Transcripts of the private heart
Have gained a sanction from thy falling tears;
Then I repent not. But my soul hath fears
Breathed from eternity; for, as a dart
Cleaves the blank air, Life flies: now every day
Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift wheel

[1] This line alludes to Sonnets which will be found in another Class.

Of the revolving week. Away, away,
All fitful cares, all transitory zeal!
So timely Grace the immortal wing may heal,
And honour rest upon the senseless clay.

Published 1827

PART III

I

THOUGH the bold wings of Poesy affect
The clouds, and wheel around the mountain tops
Rejoicing, from her loftiest height she drops
Well pleased to skim the plain with wild flowers deckt,
Or muse in solemn grove whose shades protect
The lingering dew—there steals along, or stops
Watching the least small bird that round her hops,
Or creeping worm, with sensitive respect.
Her functions are they therefore less divine,
Her thoughts less deep, or void of grave intent
Her simplest fancies? Should that fear be thine,
Aspiring Votary, ere thy hand present
One offering, kneel before her modest shrine,
With brow in penitential sorrow bent!

Published 1842

II

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820

YE sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth!
In whose collegiate shelter England's Flowers
Expand, enjoying through their vernal hours
The air of liberty, the light of truth;
Much have ye suffered from Time's gnawing tooth:
Yet, O ye spires of Oxford! domes and towers!
Gardens and groves! your presence overpowers
The soberness of reason; till, in sooth,
Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange
I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious street—
An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown!

III

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820

SHAME on this faithless heart! that could allow
Such transport, though but for a moment's space;
Not while—to aid the spirit of the place—
The crescent moon clove with its glittering prow
The clouds, or night-bird sang from shady bough;
But in plain daylight:——She, too, at my side,
Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
Maintains inviolate its slightest vow!
Sweet Fancy! other gifts must I receive;
Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim;
Take from *her* brow the withering flowers of eve,
And to that brow life's morning wreath restore;
Let *her* be comprehended in the frame
Of these illusions, or they please no more.

IV

RECOLLECTION OF THE PORTRAIT OF KING HENRY THE EIGHTH, TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE

THE imperial Stature, the colossal stride,
Are yet before me; yet do I behold
The broad full visage, chest of amplest mould,
The vestments 'broidered with barbaric pride:
And lo! a poniard, at the Monarch's side,
Hangs ready to be grasped in sympathy
With the keen threatenings of that fulgent eye,
Below the white-rimmed bonnet, far-descried.
Who trembles now at thy capricious mood?
'Mid those surrounding Worthies, haughty King,
We rather think, with grateful mind sedate,
How Providence educeth, from the spring
Of lawless will, unlooked-for streams of good,
Which neither force shall check nor time abate!

Published 1827

V

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY (GEORGE THE THIRD)

WARD of the Law!—dread Shadow of a King!
Whose realm had dwindled to one stately room;
Whose universe was gloom immersed in gloom,
Darkness as thick as life o'er life could fling,

Save haply for some feeble glimmering
Of Faith and Hope—if thou, by nature's doom,
Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,
Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow cling,
When thankfulness were best?—Fresh-flowing tears,
Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding sigh,
Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
Which justly it can claim. The Nation hears
In this deep knell, silent for threescore years,
An unexampled voice of awful memory!

1820

VI

JUNE, 1820

FAME tells of groves—from England far away—
Groves[1] that inspire the Nightingale to trill
And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay;
Such bold report I venture to gainsay:
For I have heard the quire of Richmond hill
Chanting, with indefatigable bill,
Strains that recalled to mind a distant day;
When, haply under shade of that same wood,
And scarcely conscious of the dashing oars
Plied steadily between those willowy shores,
The sweet-souled Poet of the Seasons stood—
Listening, and listening long, in rapturous mood,
Ye heavenly Birds! to your Progenitors.

VII

A PARSONAGE IN OXFORDSHIRE

WHERE holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
Is marked by no distinguishable line;
The turf unites, the pathways intertwine;
And, wheresoe'er the stealing footstep tends,
Garden, and that Domain where kindred, friends,
And neighbours rest together, here confound
Their several features, mingled like the sound
Of many waters, or as evening blends

[1] Wallachia is the country alluded to.

With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave;
And while those lofty poplars gently wave
Their tops, between them comes and goes a sky
Bright as the glimpses of eternity,
To saints accorded in their mortal hour.

1820

VIII

COMPOSED AMONG THE RUINS OF A CASTLE IN NORTH WALES

THROUGH shattered galleries, 'mid roofless halls,
Wandering with timid footsteps oft betrayed,
The Stranger sighs, nor scruples to upbraid
Old Time, though he, gentlest among the Thralls
Of Destiny, upon these wounds hath laid
His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
From the wan Moon, upon the towers and walls,
Light deepening the profoundest sleep of shade.
Relic of Kings! Wreck of forgotten wars,
To winds abandoned and the prying stars,
Time *loves* Thee! at his call the Seasons twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar;
And, though past pomp no changes can restore,
A soothing recompense, his gift, is thine!

Probably 1824

IX

TO THE LADY E. B. AND THE HON. MISS P.

Composed in the Grounds of Plass Newidd, near Llangollen, 1824

A STREAM, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
Along the VALE OF MEDITATION[1] flows;
So styled by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
In Nature's face the expression of repose;
Or haply there some pious hermit chose
To live and die, the peace of heaven his aim;
To whom the wild sequestered region owes,
At this late day, its sanctifying name.
GLYN CAFAILLGAROCH, in the Cambrian tongue,
In ours, the VALE OF FRIENDSHIP, let *this* spot
Be named; where, faithful to a low-roofed Cot,
On Deva's banks, ye have abode so long;
Sisters in love, a love allowed to climb,
Even on this earth, above the reach of Time!

[1] Glyn Myrvr.

X

TO THE TORRENT AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, NORTH WALES, 1824

HOW art thou named? In search of what strange land,
From what huge height, descending? Can such force
Of waters issue from a British source,
Or hath not Pindus fed thee, where the band
Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with hand
Desperate as thine? Or come the incessant shocks
From that young Stream, that smites the throbbing rocks,
Of Viamala? There I seem to stand,
As in life's morn; permitted to behold,
From the dread chasm, woods climbing above woods,
In pomp that fades not; everlasting snows;
And skies that ne'er relinquish their repose;
Such power possess the family of floods
Over the minds of Poets, young or old!

XI

IN THE WOODS OF RYDAL

WILD Redbreast! hadst thou at Jemima's lip
Pecked, as at mine, thus boldly, Love might say,
A half-blown rose had tempted thee to sip
Its glistening dews; but hallowed is the clay
Which the Muse warms; and I, whose head is grey,
Am not unworthy of thy fellowship;
Nor could I let one thought—one motion—slip
That might thy sylvan confidence betray.
For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed no sparrow falleth to the ground?
Who gives his Angels wings to speed through air,
And rolls the planets through the blue profound;
Then peck or perch, fond Flutterer! nor forbear
To trust a Poet in still musings bound.

Published 1827

XII

WHEN Philoctetes in the Lemnian isle
Like a Form sculptured on a monument
Lay couched; on him or his dread bow unbent
Some wild Bird oft might settle and beguile

The rigid features of a transient smile,
Disperse the tear, or to the sigh give vent,
Slackening the pains of ruthless banishment
From his lov'd home, and from heroic toil.
And trust that spiritual Creatures round us move,
Griefs to allay which Reason cannot heal;
Yea, veriest reptiles have sufficed to prove
To fettered wretchedness that no Bastille
Is deep enough to exclude the light of love,
Though man for brother man has ceased to feel.

Published 1827

XIII

WHILE Anna's peers and early playmates tread,
In freedom, mountain-turf and river's marge;
Or float with music in the festal barge;
Rein the proud steed, or through the dance are led;
Her doom it is to press a weary bed—
Till oft her guardian Angel, to some charge
More urgent called, will stretch his wings at large,
And friends too rarely prop the languid head.
Yet, helped by Genius—untired comforter,
The presence even of a stuffed Owl for her
Can cheat the time; sending her fancy out
To ivied castles and to moonlight skies,
Though he can neither stir a plume, nor shout;
Nor veil, with restless film, his staring eyes.

Published 1827

XIV

TO THE CUCKOO

NOT the whole warbling grove in concert heard
When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill
Like the first summons, Cuckoo! of thy bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired.
The captive 'mid damp vaults unsunned, unaired,
Measuring the periods of his lonely doom,
That cry can reach; and to the sick man's room
Sends gladness, by no languid smile declared.
The lordly eagle-race through hostile search
May perish; time may come when never more
The wilderness shall hear the lion roar;
But, long as cock shall crow from household perch

To rouse the dawn, soft gales shall speed thy wing,
And thy erratic voice be faithful to the Spring!

Published 1827

XV

TO ——

'Miss not the occasion: by the forelock take
That subtle Power, the never-halting Time,
Lest a mere moment's putting-off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime.'

'WAIT, prithee, wait!' this answer Lesbia threw
Forth to her Dove, and took no further heed.
Her eye was busy, while her fingers flew
Across the harp, with soul-engrossing speed;
But from that bondage when her thoughts were freed
She rose, and toward the close-shut casement drew,
Whence the poor unregarded Favourite, true
To old affections, had been heard to plead
With flapping wing for entrance. What a shriek
Forced from that voice so lately tuned to a strain
Of harmony!—a shriek of terror, pain,
And self-reproach! for, from aloft, a Kite
Pounced,—and the Dove, which from its ruthless beak
She could not rescue, perished in her sight!

Published 1835

XVI

THE INFANT M—— M——

UNQUIET Childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower
That neither feeds nor wastes its vital power
In painful struggles. Months each other chase,
And nought untunes that Infant's voice; no trace
Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek;
Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
That one enrapt with gazing on her face
(Which even the placid innocence of death
Could scarcely make more placid, heaven more bright)
Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
The Virgin, as she shone with kindred light;
A nursling couched upon her mother's knee,
Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.

Published 1827

XVII

TO ——, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR

SUCH age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
To something purer and more exquisite
Than flesh and blood; whene'er thou meet'st my sight,
When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
And head that droops because the soul is meek,
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
From desolation toward the genial prime;
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
And filling more and more with crystal light
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

1824

XVIII

TO ROTHA Q——

ROTHA, my Spiritual Child! this head was grey
When at the sacred font for thee I stood;
Pledged till thou reach the verge of womanhood,
And shalt become thy own sufficient stay:
Too late, I feel, sweet Orphan! was the day
For steadfast hope the contract to fulfil;
Yet shall my blessing hover o'er thee still,
Embodied in the music of this Lay,
Breathed forth beside the peaceful mountain Stream[1]
Whose murmur soothed thy languid Mother's ear
After her throes, this Stream of name more dear
Since thou dost bear it,—a memorial theme
For others; for thy future self, a spell
To summon fancies out of Time's dark cell.

Published 1827

XIX

A GRAVESTONE UPON THE FLOOR IN THE CLOISTERS OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

'*MISERRIMUS!*' and neither name nor date,
Prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the stone;
Nought but that word assigned to the unknown,
That solitary word—to separate

[1] The river Rotha, that flows into Windermere from the Lakes of Grasmere and Rydal.

From all, and cast a cloud around the fate
Of him who lies beneath. Most wretched one,
Who chose his epitaph?—Himself alone
Could thus have dared the grave to agitate,
And claim, among the dead, this awful crown;
Nor doubt that He marked also for his own
Close to these cloistral steps a burial-place,
That every foot might fall with heavier tread,
Trampling upon his vileness. Stranger, pass
Softly!—To save the contrite, Jesus bled.

Published 1829

XX

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES DISCOVERED AT BISHOPSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

WHILE poring Antiquarians search the ground
Upturned with curious pains, the Bard, a Seer,
Takes fire:—The men that have been reappear;
Romans for travel girt, for business gowned;
And some recline on couches, myrtle-crowned,
In festal glee: why not? For fresh and clear,
As if its hues were of the passing year,
Dawns this time-buried pavement. From that mound
Hoards may come forth of Trajans, Maximins,
Shrunk into coins with all their warlike toil:
Or a fierce impress issues with its foil
Of tenderness—the Wolf, whose suckling Twins
The unlettered ploughboy pities when he wins
The casual treasure from the furrowed soil.

Published 1835

XXI

1830

CHATSWORTH! thy stately mansion, and the pride
Of thy domain, strange contrast do present
To house and home in many a craggy rent
Of the wild Peak; where new-born waters glide
Through fields whose thrifty occupants abide
As in a dear and chosen banishment,
With every semblance of entire content;
So kind is simple Nature, fairly tried!
Yet He whose heart in childhood gave her troth
To pastoral dales, thin-set with modest farms,
May learn, if judgment strengthen with his growth,
That, not for Fancy only, pomp hath charms;
And, strenuous to protect from lawless harms
The extremes of favoured life, may honour both.

XXII

A TRADITION OF OKER HILL IN DARLEY DALE, DERBYSHIRE

'TIS said that to the brow of yon fair hill
Two Brothers clomb, and, turning face from face,
Nor one look more exchanging, grief to still
Or feed, each planted on that lofty place
A chosen Tree; then, eager to fulfil
Their courses, like two new-born rivers, they
In opposite directions urged their way
Down from the far-seen mount. No blast might kill
Or blight that fond memorial;—the trees grew,
And now entwine their arms; but ne'er again
Embraced those Brothers upon earth's wide plain;
Nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew
Until their spirits mingled in the sea
That to itself takes all, Eternity.

Published 1829

XXIII

FILIAL PIETY

(On the Wayside between Preston and Liverpool)

UNTOUCHED through all severity of cold;
Inviolate, whate'er the cottage hearth
Might need for comfort, or for festal mirth;
That Pile of Turf is half a century old:
Yes, Traveller! fifty winters have been told
Since suddenly the dart of death went forth
'Gainst him who raised it,—his last work on earth:
Thence has it, with the Son, so strong a hold
Upon his Father's memory, that his hands,
Through reverence, touch it only to repair
Its waste.—Though crumbling with each breath of air,
In annual renovation thus it stands—
Rude Mausoleum! but wrens nestle there,
And red-breasts warble when sweet sounds are rare.

1828

XXIV

TO THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT

[Painted at Rydal Mount, by W. Pickersgill, Esq., for St. John's College, Cambridge.]

GO, faithful Portrait! and where long hath knelt
Margaret, the saintly Foundress, take thy place;
And, if Time spare the colours for the grace
Which to the work surpassing skill hath dealt,

Thou, on thy rock reclined, though kingdoms melt
And states be torn up by the roots, wilt seem
To breathe in rural peace, to hear the stream,
And think and feel as once the Poet felt.
Whate'er thy fate, those features have not grown
Unrecognised through many a household tear
More prompt, more glad, to fall than drops of dew
By morning shed around a flower half-blown;
Tears of delight, that testified how true
To life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear!

Probably 1832

XXV

WHY art thou silent! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant—
Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For nought but what thy happiness could spare.
Speak—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know!

Published 1835

XXVI

TO B. R. HAYDON, ON SEEING HIS PICTURE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE ON THE ISLAND OF ST. HELENA

HAYDON! let worthier judges praise the skill
Here by thy pencil shown in truth of lines
And charm of colours; *I* applaud those signs
Of thought, that give the true poetic thrill;
That unencumbered whole of blank and still,
Sky without cloud—ocean without a wave;
And the one Man that laboured to enslave
The World, sole-standing high on the bare hill—
Back turned, arms folded, the unapparent face
Tinged, we may fancy, in this dreary place
With light reflected from the invisible sun
Set, like his fortunes; but not set for aye
Like them. The unguilty Power pursues his way,
And before *him* doth dawn perpetual run.

June 11, 1831

XXVII

A Poet!—He hath put his heart to school,
Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
Which Art hath lodged within his hand—must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its *own* divine vitality.

Published 1842

XXVIII

THE most alluring clouds that mount the sky
Owe to a troubled element their forms,
Their hues to sunset. If with raptured eye
We watch their splendour, shall we covet storms,
And wish the Lord of day his slow decline
Would hasten, that such pomp may float on high?
Behold, already they forget to shine,
Dissolve—and leave to him who gazed a sigh.
Not loth to thank each moment for its boon
Of pure delight, come whensoe'er it may,
Peace let us seek,—to steadfast things attune
Calm expectations, leaving to the gay
And volatile their love of transient bowers,
The house that cannot pass away be ours.

Published 1842

XXIX

ON A PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON UPON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO, BY HAYDON

BY Art's bold privilege Warrior and War-horse stand
On ground yet strewn with their last battle's wreck;
Let the Steed glory while his Master's hand
Lies fixed for ages on his conscious neck;
But by the Chieftain's look, though at his side
Hangs that day's treasured sword, how firm a check
Is given to triumph and all human pride!
Yon trophied Mound shrinks to a shadowy speck

In his calm presence! Him the mighty deed
Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
As shows that time-worn face, for he such seed
Has sown as yields, we trust, the fruit of fame
In Heaven; hence no one blushes for thy name,
Conqueror, 'mid some sad thoughts, divinely blest!

Aug. 31, 1840

XXX

COMPOSED ON A MAY MORNING, 1838

LIFE with yon Lambs, like day, is just begun,
Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
Does joy approach? they meet the coming tide;
And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
Pale twilight's lingering glooms,—and in the sun
Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied;
Or gambol—each with his shadow at his side,
Varying its shape wherever he may run.
As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
All turn, and court the shining and the green,
Where herbs look up, and opening flowers are seen;
Why to God's goodness cannot We be true,
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new?

XXXI

LO! where she stands fixed in a saint-like trance,
One upward hand, as if she needed rest
From rapture, lying softly on her breast!
Nor wants her eyeball an ethereal glance;
But not the less—nay more—that countenance,
While thus illumined, tells of painful strife
For a sick heart made weary of this life
By love, long crossed with adverse circumstance.
—Would She were now as when she hoped to pass
At God's appointed hour to them who tread
Heaven's sapphire pavement, yet breathed well content,
Well pleased, her foot should print earth's common grass,
Lived thankful for day's light, for daily bread,
For health, and time in obvious duty spent.

Published 1842

XXXII

TO A PAINTER

ALL praise the Likeness by thy skill portrayed;
But 'tis a fruitless task to paint for me,
Who, yielding not to changes Time has made,
By the habitual light of memory see
Eyes unbedimmed, see bloom that cannot fade,
And smiles that from their birthplace ne'er shall flee
Into the land where ghosts and phantoms be;
And, seeing this, own nothing in its stead.
Couldst thou go back into far-distant years,
Or share with me, fond thought! that inward eye,
Then, and then only, Painter! could thy Art
The visual powers of Nature satisfy,
Which hold, whate'er to common sight appears,
Their sovereign empire in a faithful heart.

1840

XXXIII

ON THE SAME SUBJECT

THOUGH I beheld at first with blank surprise
This Work, I now have gazed on it so long
I see its truth with unreluctant eyes;
O, my Belovèd! I have done thee wrong,
Conscious of blessedness, but, whence it sprung,
Ever too heedless, as I now perceive:
Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve,
And the old day was welcome as the young,
As welcome, and as beautiful—in sooth
More beautiful, as being a thing more holy:
Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
Of all thy goodness, never melancholy;
To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast
Into one vision, future, present, past.

1840

XXXIV

HARK! 'tis the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest,
By twilight premature of cloud and rain;
Nor does that roaring wind deaden his strain
Who carols thinking of his Love and nest,
And seems, as more incited, still more blest.
Thanks; thou hast snapped a fireside Prisoner's chain,
Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in a moment charmed my cares to rest.

Yes, I will forth, bold Bird! and front the blast,
That we may sing together, if thou wilt,
So loud, so clear, my Partner through life's day,
Mute in her nest love-chosen, if not love-built
Like thine, shall gladden, as in seasons past,
Thrilled by loose snatches of the social Lay.

Rydal Mount, 1838

XXXV

'TIS He whose yester-evening's high disdain
Beat back the roaring storm—but how subdued
His day-break note, a sad vicissitude!
Does the hour's drowsy weight his glee restrain?
Or, like the nightingale, her joyous vein
Pleased to renounce, does this dear Thrush attune
His voice to suit the temper of yon Moon
Doubly depressed, setting, and in her wane?
Rise, tardy Sun! and let the Songster prove
(The balance trembling between night and morn
No longer) with what ecstasy upborne
He can pour forth his spirit. In heaven above,
And earth below, they best can serve true gladness
Who meet most feelingly the calls of sadness.

1838

XXXVI

OH what a Wreck! how changed in mien and speech!
Yet—though dread Powers, that work in mystery, spin
Entanglings of the brain; though shadows stretch
O'er the chilled heart—reflect; far, far within
Hers is a holy Being, freed from Sin.
She is not what she seems, a forlorn wretch,
But delegated Spirits comfort fetch
To Her from heights that Reason may not win.
Like Children, She is privileged to hold
Divine communion; both to live and move,
Whate'er to shallow Faith their ways unfold,
Inly illumined by Heaven's pitying love;
Love pitying innocence, not long to last,
In them—in Her our sins and sorrows past.

1837

XXXVII

INTENT on gathering wool from hedge and brake
Yon busy Little-ones rejoice that soon
A poor old Dame will bless them for the boon:
Great is their glee while flake they add to flake

With rival earnestness; far other strife
Than will hereafter move them, if they make
Pastime their idol, give their day of life
To pleasure snatched for reckless pleasure's sake.
Can pomp and show allay one heart-born grief?
Pains which the World inflicts can she requite?
Not for an interval however brief;
The silent thoughts that search for steadfast light,
Love from her depths, and Duty in her might,
And Faith—these only yield secure relief.

March 8, 1842

XXXVIII

A PLEA FOR AUTHORS, MAY, 1838

FAILING impartial measure to dispense
To every suitor, Equity is lame;
And social Justice, stript of reverence
For natural rights, a mockery and a shame;
Law but a servile dupe of false pretence,
If, guarding grossest things from common claim
Now and for ever, She, to works that came
From mind and spirit, grudge a short-lived fence.
'What! lengthened privilege, a lineal tie,
For *Books*!' Yes, heartless Ones, or be it proved
That 'tis a fault in Us to have lived and loved
Like others, with like temporal hopes to die;
No public harm that Genius from her course
Be turned; and streams of truth dried up, even at their source!

XXXIX

VALEDICTORY SONNET

Closing the Volume of Sonnets published in 1838

SERVING no haughty Muse, my hands have here
Disposed some cultured Flowerets (drawn from spots
Where they bloomed singly, or in scattered knots,)
Each kind in several beds of one parterre;
Both to allure the casual Loiterer,
And that, so placed, my Nurslings may requite
Studious regard with opportune delight,
Nor be unthanked, unless I fondly err.
But metaphor dismissed, and thanks apart,
Reader, farewell! My last words let them be—
If in this book Fancy and Truth agree;
If simple Nature trained by careful Art
Through It have won a passage to thy heart;
Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee!

1838

XL

TO THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D., MASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL,

After the perusal of his *Theophilus Anglicanus*, recently published

ENLIGHTENED Teacher, gladly from thy hand
Have I received this proof of pains bestowed
By Thee to guide thy Pupils on the road
That, in our native isle, and every land,
The Church, when trusting in divine command
And in her Catholic attributes, hath trod:
O may these lessons be with profit scanned
To thy heart's wish, thy labour blest by God!
So the bright faces of the young and gay
Shall look more bright—the happy, happier still,
Catch, in the pauses of their keenest play,
Motions of thought which elevate the will
And, like the Spire that from your classic Hill
Points heavenward, indicate the end and way.

Rydal Mount, Dec. 11, 1843

XLI

TO THE PLANET VENUS,

Upon its approximation (as an Evening Star) to the Earth, January, 1838

WHAT strong allurement draws, what spirit guides,
Thee, Vesper! brightening still, as if the nearer
Thou com'st to man's abode the spot grew dearer
Night after night? True is it Nature hides
Her treasures less and less.—Man now presides
In power, where once he trembled in his weakness;
Science advances with gigantic strides;
But are we aught enriched in love and meekness?
Aught dost thou see, bright Star! of pure and wise
More than in humbler times graced human story;
That makes our hearts more apt to sympathise
With heaven, our souls more fit for future glory,
When earth shall vanish from our closing eyes,
Ere we lie down in our last dormitory?

XLII

WANSFELL![1] this Household has a favoured lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her rays,
Or when along thy breast serenely float

[1] The Hill that rises to the south-east, above Ambleside.

Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a note
Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy praise
For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
Of glory lavished on our quiet days.
Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone
From every object dear to mortal sight,
As soon we shall be, may these words attest
How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.

Dec. 24, 1842

XLIII

WHILE beams of orient light shoot wide and high,
Deep in the vale a little rural Town[1]
Breathes forth a cloud-like creature of its own,
That mounts not toward the radiant morning sky,
But, with a less ambitious sympathy,
Hangs o'er its Parent waking to the cares
Troubles and toils that every day prepares.
So Fancy, to the musing Poet's eye,
Endears the Lingerer. And how blest her sway
(Like influence never may my soul reject!)
If the calm Heaven, now to its zenith decked
With glorious forms in numberless array,
To the lone shepherd on the hills disclose
Gleams from a world in which the saints repose.

Jan. 1, 1843

XLIV

IN my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud
Slowly surmounting some invidious hill,
Rose out of darkness: the bright Work stood still;
And might of its own beauty have been proud,
But it was fashioned and to God was vowed
By Virtues that diffused, in every part,
Spirit divine through forms of human art:
Faith had her arch—her arch, when winds blow loud,
Into the consciousness of safety thrilled;
And Love her towers of dread foundation laid
Under the grave of things; Hope had her spire
Star-high, and pointing still to something higher;
Trembling I gazed, but heard a voice—it said,
'Hell-gates are powerless Phantoms when *we* build.'

Published 1827

[1] Ambleside.

XLV

ON THE PROJECTED KENDAL AND WINDERMERE RAILWAY

IS then no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault?[1] Schemes of retirement sown
In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure
As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,
Must perish;—how can they this blight endure?
And must he too the ruthless change bemoan
Who scorns a false utilitarian lure
'Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?
Baffle the threat, bright Scene, from Orrest-head
Given to the pausing traveller's rapturous glance:
Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,
Speak, passing winds; ye torrents, with your strong
And constant voice, protest against the wrong.

Oct. 12, 1844

XLVI

PROUD were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:
Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,
That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,
And clear way made for her triumphal car
Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold!
Hear YE that Whistle? As her long-linked Train
Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view?
Yes, ye were startled;—and, in balance true,
Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,
Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you
To share the passion of a just disdain.

1844

[1] The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. 'Fell it!' exclaimed the yeoman, 'I had rather fall on my knees and worship it.' It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling.

XLVII

AT FURNESS ABBEY

HERE, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing,
Man left this Structure to become Time's prey,
A soothing spirit follows in the way
That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing.
See how her Ivy clasps the sacred Ruin,
Fall to prevent or beautify decay;
And, on the mouldered walls, how bright, how gay,
The flowers in pearly dews their bloom renewing!
Thanks to the place, blessings upon the hour;
Even as I speak the rising Sun's first smile
Gleams on the grass-crowned top of yon tall Tower,
Whose cawing occupants with joy proclaim
Prescriptive title to the shattered pile,
Where, Cavendish, *thine* seems nothing but a name!

Probably 1845

XLVIII

AT FURNESS ABBEY

WELL have yon Railway Labourers to THIS ground
Withdrawn for noontide rest. They sit, they walk
Among the Ruins, but no idle talk
Is heard; to grave demeanour all are bound;
And from one voice a Hymn with tuneful sound
Hallows once more the long-deserted Quire
And thrills the old sepulchral earth around.
Others look up, and with fixed eyes admire
That wide-spanned arch, wondering how it was raised,
To keep, so high in air, its strength and grace:
All seem to feel the spirit of the place,
And by the general reverence God is praised:
Profane Despoilers, stand ye not reproved,
While thus these simple-hearted men are moved?

June 21, 1845

NOTES

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

P. 1. I. Extract. *From the Conclusion of a Poem composed in anticipation of leaving School:*—'I wrote, while yet a schoolboy, a long poem running upon my own adventures and the scenery of the county in which I was brought up. The only part of that poem which has been preserved is the conclusion of it, which stands at the beginning of my collected poems.' *Autobiographical Memoranda* in the *Memoirs of W. W.*, by Christopher Wordsworth, vol. i. p. 12. 'The poem of which it [the Extract] was the conclusion, was of many hundred lines, and contained thoughts and images, most of which have been dispersed through my other writings.'—I. F. Cp. *The Prelude*, viii., 468 foll.

P. 2. II. Written in very Early Youth:—Dated 1786 by W. in ed. 1837. Published originally in *The Morning Post*, Feb. 13, 1802. From 1807 to 1843 included among *Miscellaneous Sonnets*.

P. 2. III. An Evening Walk. *Addressed to a Young Lady:*—The poet's sister Dorothy. For the original form of this poem cp. vol. iii. p. 450.

L. 9. In ed. 1793, l. 9 ran:

Where, bosom'd deep, the shy Winander peeps.

In 1827, partly for euphony, partly no doubt to avoid the strained use of 'bosom'd':

Where, deep embosom'd, shy Winander peeps.

The final text (1836) follows the severer style characteristic of Wordsworth.

P. 3, l. 32. The following lines, which appeared only in ed. 1793, are a good illustration of the faults which Wordsworth grew out of, and at the same time of his characteristic realism:

While, Memory at my side, I wander here,
Starts at the simplest sight th' unbidden tear,
A form discover'd at the well-known seat,
A spot, that angles at the riv'let's feet,
The ray the cot of morning trav'ling nigh,
And sail that glides the well-known alders by.

L. 48. *Still-twinkling:*—*i.e.* twinkling continually. Cp. the use of 'still' in *The Prelude*, i. 455.

L. 54. I have added a comma after 'ghyll,' because I believe that ll. 55, 56, which were added to the poem in ed. 1820, refer entirely to

what follows. It is the suddenness of the appearance of the 'obscure retreat' which seems like the effect of 'enchantment.'

P. 4, l. 73. Alluding to Horace's well-known lyric *O fons Bandusiae* (*Od.* III. 13.). Wordsworth wrote Blandusia, a reading of the name with some slight authority, and found in a few printed edd. of Horace.

L. 85. Ll. 70-85 were added in ed. 1820.

P. 5, l. 127. Ll. 98-127 represent only twelve lines (97-108) in the original ed.; the passage was entirely rewritten for ed. 1820.

L. 133. The poem referred to is: *A poem written during a shooting excursion on the moors: by the Rev. William Greenwood, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Rector of Bignor, in Sussex,* MDCCLXXXVII. p. 18:

> . . . the broom
> In scattered plots by vivid rings of green
> Encircled . . .

L. 135. 'Down the rough slope the pondrous waggon rings.'

Beattie.—W. 1793.—*The Minstrel,* Bk. I. stanza 39.

L. 141. *Blasted:*—Wordsworth italicised this word presumably because it was not in his day familiarly used in this sense. The earliest occurrence of it noted in *N. E. D.* is in 1758, Borlase's *Nat. Hist. Cornwall,* XV. § i. 161.

P. 6, l. 170. *I.e.* A bar divides the sun's orb as a bar might divide an ægis, like the shield of ægis-bearing Zeus.

L. 175. *Prospect all on fire:*—This phrase, hitherto untraced, is from a forgotten poem called *Sunday Thoughts,* by Moses Browne. Wordsworth took it no doubt from Scott's *Critical Essays* (pp. 349 and 351, where Scott highly praises the phrase itself). The passage quoted by Scott runs:

> Look how the rapid journeyer seems to bait
> His slackening steeds, and loos'd to evening sports
> Shoots down obliquely his diverging beams,
> That kindle on opposing hills the blaze
> Of glittering turrets and illumined domes,
> A prospect all on fire. . . .

For Scott, see next note.

P. 7, l. 191. *The Seasons:*—'Summer,' ll. 1627-29 (Aldine edition, 1862):—

> . . . he dips his orb;
> Now half-immers'd; and now a golden curve
> Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.

In the note of 1793, Wordsworth added, 'See Scott's *Critical Essays.*' The reference is to the *Critical Essays* (pp. 346-48) of John Scott of Amwell, the Quaker poet (1730-1783). As the book is very rare, and so little known, that Prof. Knight apparently mistook Wordsworth's reference for one to Sir Walter Scott (his only note is, 'It is difficult to know to what Wordsworth here alludes'), I append the passage in question,

which is very characteristic of the volume in which it occurs. The volume contains nine essays, on nine poetical works, viz.—Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, Milton's *Lycidas*, Pope's *Windsor Forest*, Dyer's *Grongar Hill* and *Ruins of Rome*, Collins' *Oriental Eclogues*, Gray's *Churchyard Elegy*, Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, Thomson's *Seasons*. The author's whole conception of poetry is as tame as anything in the eighteenth century. What attracted Wordsworth was no doubt his sensible, if somewhat pedantic, objection to meaningless 'poetic diction.' Here is the passage. 'Our author's [Thomson's] description of the sun setting is another remarkable instance of his peculiar manner:

> Low walks the sun, and broadens by degrees,
> Just o'er the verge of day. The shifting clouds
> Assembled gay, a richly-gorgeous train,
> In all their pomp attend his setting throne.
> Air, earth, and ocean smile immense. And now,
> As if his weary chariot sought the bowers
> Of Amphitritè, and her tending nymphs,
> (So Grecian fable sung) he dips his orb;
> Now half-immers'd; and now a golden curve
> Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.

The passage is truly poetical, but very incorrect. The painting is strong, but careless; it is a group of beautiful, but inconsistent imagery. The "sun's walking" is an act that infers the supposition of an imaginary person; its "broadening" is an act that can relate only to the real visible globe of fire; the mention of the "setting throne" again indicates a prosopopœia, and the "dipping" of "the orb" again implies a reference to the natural object. This would have been a most masterly piece of composition if the verb "walks" had been exchanged for some other not incongruous to the verb "broaden"; if the "setting throne," the unmeaning phrase, "just o'er the verge of day," and the bombastick "immense smile of air," etc., had been all omitted; the gradual descent and enlargement of the sun, its immersion within the horizon, reduction to a curve and total disappearance (all fine, natural and picturesque circumstances), been regularly connected; and the romantick idea of "Phœbus's" chariot seeking the bowers of Amphitrite, been kept intirely (*sic*) distinct, and introduced last as an illustrative illusion.'

L. 205. This and the next six lines took the place, in 1836, of the following four lines—an interesting instance of an improvement effected after many years:

> Lost gradual o'er the heights in pomp they go,
> While silent stands th' admiring vale below
> Till, but the lonely beacon, all is fled,
> That tips with eve's last gleam his spiry head.

The expression 'visionary horsemen' is used in the passage in Clarke's *Survey* referred to in Wordsworth's note.

L. 207. James Clarke (not Clark), *Survey*, etc., p. 55. Part of the passage is quoted with other illustrative matter by Prof. Knight (*Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. i. p. 19).

L. 215. This couplet, which originally ran :

And, fronting the bright west in stronger lines,
The oak its dark'ning boughs and foliage twines,

was omitted in ed. 1815, but restored in its final form in 1820. In the Fenwick note Wordsworth says of it : 'This is feebly and imperfectly expressed, but I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. It was on the way between Hawkshead and Ambleside, and gave me extreme pleasure. The moment was important in my poetical history ; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them ; and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age.'

Ll. 216-221. A comparison of these lines, reached in 1836, with the text of 1793 (vol. iii. p. 455), well illustrates the importance of the 1836 revision and the progress in severity of Wordsworth's style.

P. 8, l. 231. This is a fact of which I have been an eye-witness.—W. (1793). *Mantling* here probably means 'covering' ; but cp. *Paradise Lost*, vii. 439, and note below, p. 537.

L. 235. The lily of the valley is found in great abundance in the smaller islands of Winandermere.—W. (1793).

L. 237. Collins, *Ode to the Passions*, l. 60.

L. 249. The following lines occur only in ed. 1793 : the inappropriate sentiment of the last two, and the typically 'poetic diction' of the expression 'rocking shades' when used for trees in connection with the 'sound' made by their rocking branches, sufficiently explain the excision :

No ruder sound your desart haunts invades,
Than waters dashing wild, or rocking shades.
Ye ne'er, like hapless human wanderers, throw
Your young on winter's winding sheet of snow.

Ll. 252-278 should be compared with the longer passage of ed. 1793 with its accumulation of horrors, inartistic perhaps, and often expressed in strained language, but very impressive in its vivid realism. The description was gradually pruned, in edd. 1820, 1827, 1836, 1845.

L. 286. A passage of twenty lines followed here in ed. 1793 and was omitted in ed. 1820. After l. 294 six lines stood in 1793, the last four of which were cancelled in 1815, the first two in 1827.

P. 9, l. 291. Alluding to this passage of Spenser—

Her angel face
As the great eye of Heaven shined bright,
And made a sunshine in that shady place.

W. (1793).

The Faerie Queene, bk. I. canto iii. stanza 4. Spenser wrote 'the shady place.'

L. 304. After this line a passage of eight lines (ed. 1793) was omitted in ed. 1815; similarly ed. 1815 omitted a couplet after l. 306, another after l. 308, and eight lines after l. 314.

L. 305. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, IV., i.

And like this insubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rack behind.

P. 10, l. 330. In ed. 1793 follows this couplet:

While rose and poppy, as the glow-worm fades,
Checquer with paler red the thicket shades.

The attempt to describe too much, and the inappropriate juxtaposition of the two colour-pictures, no doubt determined Wordsworth to make the excision.

L. 334. This line was unfortunately substituted in ed. 1836 for the original:

She lifts in silence up her lovely face:

no doubt because of the position of 'up.' For a similar, but much less happy, position cp. the original text of this poem, l. 28:

When Life rear'd laughing up her morning sun.

L. 347. This poem was finished and dedicated to his sister after the Long Vacation in 1789. That and the previous Long Vacation had been spent chiefly in the lake district, partly in the company of Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Hutchinson. In a letter of Dorothy Wordsworth to a friend written soon after the publication of *An Evening Walk*, she quotes from a letter of her brother speaking of 'that sympathy which will almost identify us, when we have stolen to our little cottage' (Knight's *Life*, i. (ix.) p. 83). These are some of the earliest mentions of the project which was evidently for many years in their hearts, and was finally realised in Dove Cottage.

P. 11, l. 366. Prof. Knight refers to lines of the Rev. Dr. John Brown (1715-1766) quoted by Wordsworth in his *Guide through the District of the Lakes*, § 1:

But the soft murmur of swift-gushing rills,
Forth issuing from the mountain's distant steep
(Unheard till now, and now scarce heard), proclaimed
All things at rest.

'Dr. John Brown was one of the first, as Wordsworth pointed out, to lead the way to a true estimate of the English lakes' (Prof. Knight). He was a talented, eccentric man, whose best known work was *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, but who also wrote tragedies: *Barbarossa* and *Athelstane*, and a *Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music*, and other works. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

L. 368. This line was substituted in ed. 1832 for that of ed. 1793:

List'ning th' aëreal music of the hill.

The dissyllabic scansion of 'spiritual' is characteristic of Wordsworth, and was imitated by Tennyson. It was also employed by Milton, *e.g. Par. Reg.*, l. 10.

L. 378. Of this poem and the *Descriptive Sketches*, published in the same year, 1793, Dorothy Wordsworth wrote in a letter to her friend Miss Pollard, Feb. 16th, 1793 (Knight's *Life*, i. (ix) p. 81): '. . . The scenes which he describes have been viewed with a poet's eye, and are pourtrayed with a poet's pencil, and the poems contain many passages exquisitely beautiful; but they also contain many faults, the chief of which is obscurity, and a too frequent use of some particular expressions and uncommon words, for instance "moveless." . . . The word "viewless" also is introduced far too often. . . . I regret exceedingly that he did not submit these works to the inspection of some friend before their publication, and he also joins with me in this regret. . . .' No criticism could be more just.

P. 11. IV. Lines. *Written while sailing in a boat at Evening.* These *Lines* and the following poem were originally one piece, and were so published in 1798. The separation was made 'on the recommendation of Coleridge.'—I. F. Both poems were transferred in ed. 1845 from *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection.*

P. 12. V. Remembrance of Collins. *Composed upon the Thames near Richmond*, l. 18:—'*Him*' is in italics, because the oar is suspended not for Thomson but for Collins—(Prof. Dowden). Cp. Collins, *Ode on the Death of Thomson:*

> Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
> Where Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
> And oft suspend the dashing oar
> To bid his gentle spirit rest.

P. 12. VI. Descriptive Sketches. *Taken during a Pedestrian Tour among the Alps.* The original form of this poem, written in the years 1791-1792, was published in 1793. The changes introduced in subsequent editions were so numerous and important that, in order not to burden these notes, I follow the example of the best modern editors in printing the original text in an Appendix, vol. iii. p. 462. It suffices here to say that the main effect of the alterations and omissions was to tone down both the artificial 'poetic diction,' and the equally conventional poetic melancholy with which these first fruits of Wordsworth's muse were, not unnaturally, infected. Cp. Introduction, p. xli.

For this tour cp. Introduction, p. xxx: 'Much the greatest part of this poem was composed during my walks upon the banks of the Loire, in the years 1791, 1792.'—I. F.

P. 13, l. 3. This line was inserted in ed. 1827: previously,

> Sure, nature's God that spot to man had giv'n,
> Where murmuring rivers join the song of ev'n.

After l. 6, there were four lines in ed. 1793 not subsequently reprinted.

P. 14, l. 9. The treatment of this passage (ll. 9-18) illustrates the growth of Wordsworth's robustness of sentiment. Cp. the original, vol. iii. p. 463. The principal changes were made in ed. 1827, when the 'way forlorn' gave way to the 'holiday delight,' the 'sad vacuities' to 'gains too cheaply earned,' and the 'lost flowers,' etc., to 'brisk toil,' etc. 'Velvet' was transferred from 'tread' to 'green-sward' in ed. 1820.

L. 24. *And calls it luxury:*—Addison's *Cato*, I. i. 171. 'Blesses his stars, and thinks it luxury.'

L. 34. *Rugged* was substituted for 'viewless' in ed. 1820. Cp. Dorothy Wordsworth's letter quoted above, note on l. 378 of *An Evening Walk*.

L. 43. Originally:

> Me, lur'd by hope her sorrows to remove,
> A heart, that could not much itself approve.

Recast in ed. 1836.

P. 15, l. 55. *Sober Reason* is between inverted commas in the original edition, and in edd. 1815 and 1820.

L. 61. Professor Knight cps. Pope, *Windsor Forest*, ll. 129, 130:

> He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye:
> Straight a short thunder breaks the frozen sky.

L. 71. *Parting genius:*—Milton, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, l. 186.

L. 89. The word 'viewless' was expelled here in ed. 1836 by the substitution of 'loitering traveller' for 'viewless lingerer.' Cp. note on *An Evening Walk*, l. 378 above.

L. 92. After this line the original edition had a passage (ll. 96-101) somewhat overburdened with epithets, which was transferred, with alterations, in all later editions to a later place. Cp. below, note on l. 131.

P. 16, l. 106. Here follow, in original ed. only, four lines which Wordsworth no doubt felt to be frigid and false in sentiment:

> Heedless how Pliny, musing here, survey'd
> Old Roman boats and figures thro' the shade,
> Pale Passion, overpower'd, retires and woos
> The thicket, where th' unlisten'd stock-dove coos.

There is a touch of the real Wordsworth, however, in the last words.

L. 118, till ed. 1827, followed the couplet:

> While evening's solemn bird melodious weeps,
> Heard, by star-spotted bays, beneath the steeps.

The realism of 'star-spotted,' though not felicitous, is noticeable, especially in connection with the frigid 'poetic diction' of the previous line. It is the constant juxtaposition of these two things which make these early poems of Wordsworth so interesting to the student of literary history.

L. 126. Till ed. 1836 'spotting the steaming deeps'—the word

'spotting' being evidently suggested by 'star-spotted' a few lines before.

Ll. 131-134 were transferred in all editions after the first from their original place (see orig. ed., ll. 96 foll.) to this, where they supplanted a somewhat obscure and over-phrased description. In l. 134 'sylvan' replaced 'bosom'd'; cp. note on *An Evening Walk*, l. 9. An additional objection to the use of 'bosom'd' in this line, when it stood in its original place, was the occurrence of the word a few lines before, in a more legitimate expression:

Como, bosom'd deep in chestnut groves.

P. 17, l. 146. Originally this couplet ran:

Once did I pierce to where a cabin stood,
The redbreast peace had bury'd it in wood.

In ed. 1827 was substituted:

And once I pierced the mazes of a wood,
Where, far from public haunt, a cabin stood.

The final text was reached in ed. 1836.

L. 150. This couplet (ed. 1836) replaced the single line:

Beneath an old-grey oak as violets lie.

L. 166. The whole of the following passage about the gipsy was much rehandled and gradually reduced from its original superabundance of detail and of somewhat melodramatic language. Cp. the similar treatment of the similar episode in *An Evening Walk*, above, p. 484, note on ll. 252-278.

P. 18, l. 192. *Or on her fingers:*—Originally 'on viewless fingers'; altered ed. 1836.

Ll. 196-207. This passage was very much chastened and rewritten in ed. 1836.

P. 19, l. 225. *Gleamy* was substituted for 'drizzling' in ed. 1836, while the expression 'black, drizzling crags' was removed from the passage about the Reuss a few lines before. The expression 'drizzling shower' occurs in *Paradise Lost*, vi. 546.

L. 238. Originally, 'Before those hermit doors, that never know.' In ed. 1836 'lonesome' was substituted for 'hermit,' in accordance with Wordsworth's objection to substantives used adjectivally. The text as it stands is that of 1845. Cp. the alteration of 'hamlet fame,' *An Evening Walk*, 176, to 'village fame,' *An Evening Walk*, 192; 'hermit waves,' 219, to 'flood serene,' 232; 'cottage bow'r,' 227, to 'hut-like bower,' 238. L. 328, 'Tune in the mountain dells their water lyres,' is part of a passage cancelled in all subsequent editions. In *Descriptive Sketches*, 224, 'insect buzz,' 234, 'Banditti voices,' occur in verses cancelled in 1827 and 1845 respectively; 305, 'casement shade' became 'shady porch' (244) in ed. 1836; 576, 'brother pair' became 'well-matched pair' (486) in ed. 1836; 581, 'whirlwind sound' disappeared from ed. 1836 (491); 720, 'pilgrim feet' disappeared in ed. 1820; 721, 'despot courts' became 'proud courts' in ed. 1820, 'despotic courts,' ed. 1827.

Ll. 246-249 were substituted in ed. 1845 for the somewhat obscure couplet:

> There, did the iron genius not disdain
> The gentle power that haunts the myrtle plain,
> There might the love-sick maiden, etc.

P. 20, ll. 272-274 took the place in ed. 1845 of the following:

> And mournful sounds, as of a spirit lost,
> Pipe wild along the hollow-blustering coast,
> 'Till the sun walking on his western field
> Shakes from behind the clouds his flashing shield.

The former of these couplets one does not regret, as a not very felicitous rendering of a trite image; but one would like to know why Wordsworth rejected the second.

L. 282. *West* was first italicised in ed. 1836, apparently merely to point the contrast with 'eastward' above.

L. 302. '*Faint huzzas*':—Prof. W. P. Ker has very kindly pointed out to me that Wordsworth obviously borrowed this quotation, together with its application to Dundee (which is not made by Burns), from a contemporary treatise on the picturesque, by William Gilpin,—the original, as Prof. Ker says, of Dr. Syntax: *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, made in the year* 1776, *on several Parts of Great Britain; particularly the High-Lands of Scotland.* By William Gilpin, A.M.; Prebendary of Salisbury; and Vicar of Boldre in New-Forest, near Lymington. London. 1789. Vol. I. p. 137. 'In the article of victory Dundee was mortally wounded. An old highlander shewed us a few trees, under the shade of which he was led out of the battle; and where he breathed his last with that intrepidity, which is so nobly described by a modern Scotch poet, in an interview between death and a victorious hero:

> 'Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
> Death comes—wi' fearless eye he sees him;
> Wi' bluidy han' a welcome gies him:
> An' when he fa's,
> His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him
> In faint huzzas!'
>
> Burns, *The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer*, stanza xxx.

P. 21, l. 327. There followed at this point, in the original edition only (ll. 390-397), a passage of somewhat gruesome description; another, in which the attempted realism certainly oversteps the boundary of the ludicrous, was also omitted after the original edition (ll. 408-413).

P. 22, l. 356. Before ed. 1836:

> Broke only by the melancholy sound.

Ll. 362-3 were added in ed. 1836.

Ll. 366-379. This passage was considerably chastened after the original edition, especially in edd. 1815 and 1836.

P. 24, l. 448. *'The blessings he enjoys to guard':*—Smollett, *Ode to Leven Water,* last two lines:

And hearts resolved and hands prepared
The blessings they enjoy to guard.

Ll. 449-452 represent ll. 536-541 of original edition, one of the very immature passages which only appear in that edition.

P. 25, ll. 500-517. This fine passage was the result of considerable rehandling, especially in ed. 1836, when some lines somewhat spoiled by frigid diction were omitted. Cp. orig. ed., ll. 590 foll.

P. 26, l. 520. In the original edition only there is a curiously infelicitous line here, following the line about the Seine:

Or where thick sails illume Batavia's groves.

L. 532. In the original edition this passage began:

Soon flies the little joy, etc.

Wordsworth appended the note *Optima quaeque dies, etc.,* referring to the line of Virgil (*Georgic* iii. 66):

Optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi
Prima fugit.

Ll. 532-539. This passage should be compared with the orig. ed., ll. 631 foll., as a specimen of Wordsworth's development both in literary taste and in his spiritual outlook. The first four lines grew in ed. 1836 out of this couplet:

Soon flies the little joy to man allow'd,
And tears before him travel like a cloud.

(in ed. 1815, 'And grief before him travels like a cloud'). In the following lines a series of personifications ending with:

Conscience dogging close his bleeding way
Cries out, and leads his spectres to their prey,

were toned down in ed. 1836, while the last couplet of the text was substituted for:

'Till Hope-deserted, long in vain his breath
Implores the dreadful untried sleep of Death.

There is in this last line an imaginative power which betrays the great poet, and one cannot but regret its excision, happily though the mild thought of the substituted couplet is expressed.

Ll. 540-544. This passage, and in fact the rest of the poem to the end, was much rehandled both in ed. 1815 and in ed. 1836. In l. 544 the epithet 'viewless' was ejected in ed. 1815 (orig. ed., l. 648). With the sentiment of l. 550 and the following lines cp. the verses *Composed in one of the Catholic Cantons* (vol. ii. p. 91), in which Wordsworth is evidently reminiscent of this passage. In 1820 Wordsworth, with his wife, his sister, and friend, revisited many of the scenes of this earlier tour.

Ll. 553-568. Some of the changes in this passage are noteworthy. In l. 553 (662 orig.) 'tiptoe' gave way to 'pausing,' in ed. 1836. 'Blood-red streams' only occurs in orig. ed. (663). In 557 (668) 'happy shore' became 'sacred floor' in ed. 1820. L. 669 orig. ed., 'Where the charm'd worm of pain shall gnaw no more' was altered to its present

form in ed. 1836. Ll. 561-2 represent ll. 666-667 of the original, altered both in expression and in position. L. 564 was, in original edition only (673), 'Those turrets tipp'd by hope with morning gold'; after which, in that edition only, came the couplet:

And watch, while on your brows the cross ye make,
Round your pale eyes a wintry lustre wake:

for it was substituted in ed. 1820:

In that glad moment when the hands are prest
In mute devotion on the thoughtful breast!

while in ed. 1836 ll. 565-566 were inserted. In original edition the whole passage ended with lines characteristic of that period of Wordsworth's life; cp. orig. ed., ll. 676-679.

P. 27, l. 570. Ed. 1827. Previously 'Bosom'd in gloomy woods.' In l. 569 Wordsworth wrote in original edition (680), 'to where Chamouny shields,' explaining that though 'this word is pronounced upon the spot Chámouny, I have taken the liberty of reading it long, thinking it more musical.'

Ll. 575-578 replaced orig. ed. 686-691 in ed. 1836:

That mountain's matchless height
That holds no commerce with the summer night

is a great improvement on

That mountain nam'd of white
That dallies with the Sun the summer night.

Cp. Coleridge's exclamation, 'O struggling with the darkness all the night': *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*, a poem, written in 1802, which obviously recalls this passage.

Cp. ll. 579-583 with original edition, in which, among other realistic details, the age of the mountain is stated in accordance with Archbishop Ussher's Era of Creation. This passage was practically rewritten for ed. 1820.

Ll. 589-590. It is scarce necessary to observe that these lines were written before the emancipation of Savoy.—W. (1793). Ll. 589-90 were originally:

While no Italian arts their charms combine
To teach the skirt of thy dark cloud to shine.

This awkward reminiscence of the 'silver lining' gave place in ed. 1820 to:

Hard lot!—for no Italian arts are thine
To cheat, or chear, to soften, or refine.

'Soothe' was substituted for 'cheat' in ed. 1827. After this passage came another of the 'pathetic' passages in original edition only (709-712).

L. 591. The following passage was considerably altered in ed. 1820 and compressed in ed. 1836. See original edition. In 719 original edition Wordsworth wrote:

In the wide range of many a weary round
Still have my pilgrim feet unfailing found.

In ed. 1820 'weary' became 'varied,' and 'Fleet as my passage was I still have found' got rid of the 'pilgrim feet.' Ll. 721-723 orig. ed. gave way to the present text (597-598) in ed. 1836, in which ed. ll. 601-603 were added. The latter part of the passage (604-611) was considerably compressed in ed. 1836, such expressions as 'table wealth' and 'tempting hoard' on the one hand, and the homely, but not very well expressed 'housewife, led To cull her dinner from its garden bed' being removed.

P. 28, l. 612. In original edition this passage begins with one of the more sentimental moods, and with more imitative 'poetic diction.' See orig. ed. 740-743.

Ll. 612-613. This couplet was reached after much trouble in ed. 1845. 'War's discordant habits' in orig. ed. 746 evidently displeased; ed. 1820 has 'discordant garments,' ed. 1827 'discordant vestments,' ed. 1836 'discordant garb.' The 'sullen breeze' became the 'froward breeze' in ed. 1820. The 'red banner' was altered at the dictates of history to 'three-striped banner' in ed. 1836. The following couplet was a compression, in ed. 1827, of four lines, with the substitution of 'nightingales' for the poetic diction 'solemn songstress.'

L. 632. *Pleasant* was substituted for 'long long' in ed. 1836.

P. 29, ll. 644-651 date from ed. 1836. Cp. orig. ed. 782-791. The change of political outlook is obvious.

Ll. 652-658 is the text of ed. 1836, still further softening that of ed. 1820, which itself was a complete rewriting of the turgid diction of orig. ed. 792-805.

L. 670. Cp. the close of original edition. The more cheerful note was first sounded in ed. 1827.

P. 29. VII. Lines. *Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore, commanding a beautiful prospect*:—The tree has disappeared, and the slip of common on which it stood, that ran parallel to the lake, and lay open to it, has long been enclosed; so that the road has lost much of its attraction.—I. F. The tree stood 'about three quarters of a mile from Hawkshead, on the eastern shore of the lake, a little to the left, above the present highway, as one goes towards Sawrey.'—Prof. Knight, who also remarks that there is a tree near the spot which is now called, erroneously, 'Wordsworth's Yew.'

P. 30, l. 27. This was the original reading, restored in ed. 1820, for the inferior version of ed. 1815:

> The stone-chat, or the sand-lark, restless Bird,
> Piping along the margin of the lake:

no doubt owing to the expostulation of Charles Lamb (*Letters, April* 7, 1815). 'One admirable line gone (or something come instead of it), "the stone-chat, and the glancing sand-piper," which was a line quite alive.'

L. 38. This line was added by Coleridge in ed. 1800—Prof. Knight,

who says also that in l. 30 above 'downcast' (ed. 1800) for 'downward' (ed. 1798) was an emendation by Coleridge.

P. 31. *Lines, etc. Begun before October* 1787, *finished not before* 1795:—Composed in part at school at Hawkshead.—I. F. *I.e.* before October 1787. First published in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798. In edd. 1815-1843 placed among *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection.* The close of the poem, as Mr. Hutchinson remarks (*Lyrical Ballads,* ed. 1898, p. 219), 'cannot have been written earlier than 1795, for here Wordsworth sounds a counterblast to the teacher at whose feet he had sat during the years 1793-1794,' *i.e.* Godwin.

P. 34. VIII. Guilt and Sorrow; *or, Incidents upon Salisbury Plain,* l. 81:—From a short MS. poem read to me when an undergraduate, by my schoolfellow and friend, Charles Farish, long since deceased. The verses were by a brother of his, a man of promising genius, who died young.—W.

P. 35, ll. 107-108. This couplet is an echo of one in *An Evening Walk,* ll. 248-249, of swans:

> Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
> Force half upon the wave their cumbrous flight.

L. 122. Cp. *The Prelude,* xiii. 331-335:

> It is the sacrificial altar, fed
> With living men—how deep the groans! the voice
> Of those that crowd the giant wicker thrills
> The monumental hillocks, and the pomp
> Is for both worlds, the living and the dead.

P. 37, l. 214. June was substituted for May in this line in ed. 1820.

P. 38, ll. 226-234. In the place of this stanza originally stood the two following:

> The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
> Ah! little marked, how fast they rolled away:
> Then rose a mansion proud our woods among,
> And cottage after cottage owned its sway.
> No joy to see a neighbouring house or stray
> Through pastures not his own, the master took;
> My father dared his greedy wish gainsay;
> He loved his old hereditary nook,
> And ill could I the thought of such sad parting brook.
> But, when he had refused the proffered gold,
> To cruel injuries he became a prey,
> Sore traversed in whate'er he bought and sold;
> His troubles grew upon him day by day,
> Till all his substance fell into decay.
> His little range of water was denied;[1]

[1] Several of the lakes in the north of England are let out to different fishermen, in parcels marked out by imaginary lines drawn from rock to rock.—W. (1798).

All but the bed where his old body lay,
All, all was seized, and weeping, side by side,
We sought a home where we uninjured might abide.

The substantial alteration of the text, by which this attack upon the evils of 'landlordism' was omitted, was made in ed. 1820.

P. 40, l. 297. After this stanza followed only in edd. 1798 and 1800 the following:

Oh! dreadful price of being to resign
All that is dear *in* being! better far
In Want's most lonely cave till death to pine,
Unseen, unheard, unwatched by any star;
Or in the streets and walks where proud men are,
Better our dying bodies to obtrude,
Than dog-like, wading at the heels of war,
Protract a cursed existence, with the brood
That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's blood.

P. 41, l. 326. Cp. above, *An Evening Walk*, l. 135.

P. 43, l. 405. After this stanza stood in edd. 1798-1805 the following (the motive of its removal was doubtless Wordsworth's increased conviction of the value of order and industry. Cp. *Gipsies* (written 1807), above, p. 320):

My heart is touched to think that men like these,
The rude earth's tenants, were my first relief:
How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
And their long holiday that feared not grief,
For all belonged to all, and each was chief.
No plough their sinews strained; on grating road
No wain they drove, and yet, the yellow sheaf
In every vale for their delight was stowed:
For them, in nature's meads, the milky udder flowed.

P. 45, l. 493. *Griding*:—Wordsworth no doubt borrowed this word from Milton (cp. *Paradise Lost*, vi. 329), as Milton from Spenser, and Spenser from Lydgate. Cp. *New Eng. Dict.*

P. 50. 1791-1794:—Stanzas xxiii.-xxxiv. and xxxviii.-l. of this poem were first published under the title *The Female Vagrant*, in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). *The Female Vagrant* underwent considerable changes and excisions in subsequent editions. The whole poem, *Guilt and Sorrow*, first appeared in *Poems, chiefly of Early and Late Years* (1842). The stanzas not previously published had been considerably altered since their first composition, as the following extract from Wordsworth's note dictated to Miss Fenwick testifies. 'Mr. Coleridge, when I first became acquainted with him, was so much impressed with this poem, that it would have encouraged me to publish the whole as it then stood; but the mariner's fate appeared to me so tragical as to require a treatment more subdued and yet more strictly applicable in expression than I had at first given to it. This fault was corrected nearly fifty years afterwards, when I

determined to publish the whole.' Cp. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ch. iv., where the effect of the poem upon Coleridge, then in his twenty-fourth year, is recorded amid some of his best criticism. Coleridge especially notices that in this poem Wordsworth has freed himself from the conventional, 'arbitrary and illogical phrases,' which to some extent hung about such early work as the *Descriptive Sketches*. It is noteworthy, in this connection, that in the first stanza of *The Female Vagrant* the line 'High o'er the cliffs I led my fleecy store' exemplifies in its synonym for 'sheep' the poetic diction against which the poet waged war; and that in the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) the stanza is altered so that the expression 'fleecy store' may be left out. With regard to the subject and motive of the poem, Wordsworth wrote to his friend Wrangham in Dec. 1795 (Hutchinson, *Lyrical Ballads*, 1898, p. 226) that it was composed 'to expose the vices of the penal law, and the calamities of war as they affect individuals.' It develops the sentiment of the gloomier parts of the *Descriptive Sketches*, and shows Wordsworth at the climax of his Godwinian and 'Republican' period. Cp. his *Letter to the Bishop of Landaff: by a Republican* (1793).

P. 51. The Borderers.—A Tragedy. This dramatic piece, as noticed in its title-page, was composed in 1795-1796. It lay from that time till within the last two or three months unregarded among my papers, without being mentioned even to my most intimate friends. Having, however, impressions upon my mind which made me unwilling to destroy the MS., I determined to undertake the responsibility of publishing it during my own life, rather than impose upon my successors the task of deciding its fate. Accordingly, it has been revised with some care; but, as it was at first written, and is now published, without any view to its exhibition upon the stage, not the slightest alteration has been made in the conduct of the story, or the composition of the characters; above all, in respect to the two leading persons of the drama, I felt no inducement to make any change. The study of human nature suggests this awful truth, that, as in the trials to which life subjects us, sin and crime are apt to start from their very opposite qualities, so are there no limits to the hardening of the heart, and the perversion of the understanding to which they may carry their slaves. During my long residence in France, while the revolution was rapidly advancing to its extreme of wickedness, I had frequent opportunities of being an eye-witness of this process, and it was while that knowledge was fresh upon my memory, that the Tragedy of *The Borderers* was composed.—W. (1842).

The Borderers shows Wordsworth at the gloomiest period of his spiritual experience, but just emerging from it. Whereas in *The Female Vagrant* and *Descriptive Sketches* his criticism of the social order implies hope of its regeneration through the application of Godwinian and French-revolutionary principles, in *The Borderers* his view of man and society

is more pessimistic. As Mr. Hutchinson well puts it, 'looking back upon his former self—the sanguine enthusiast of 1793—he exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul:

> We look
> But at the surfaces of things: we hear
> Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
> Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;
> Then grasp our swords, and *rush upon a cure*
> *That flatters us, because it asks not thought:*
> The deeper malady is better hid;
> *The world is poisoned at the heart.*—(ll. 1039-1046.)'

Cp. *The Prelude*, xi., especially ll. 306-320. *The Borderers* was offered to the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, on the suggestion of Thomas Knight, the actor (d. 1820, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*). 'I had no hope, nor even a wish (though a successful play would in the then state of my finances have been a most welcome piece of good fortune), that he should accept my performance; so that I incurred no disappointment when the piece was *judiciously* returned as not calculated for the stage. In this judgement I entirely concurred: and had it been otherwise, it was so natural for me to shrink from public notice, that any hope I might have had of success would not have reconciled me altogether to such an exhibition.' —I. F.

Coleridge wrote to Cottle, 'Wordsworth has written a tragedy himself. I speak with heartfelt sincerity, and, I think, unblinded judgement, when I tell you that I feel myself a little man by his side, and yet I do not think myself a less man than I formerly thought myself. His drama is absolutely wonderful. You know I do not commonly speak in such abrupt and unmingled phrases, and therefore will the more readily believe me. There are in the piece those profound touches of the human heart which I find three or four times in the *Robbers* of Schiller, and often in Shakespeare; but in Wordsworth there are no inequalities.' This enthusiasm reads strangely now that the play itself is almost unread; but it is not more disproportionate to the value of the play than the enthusiasm of a contemporary generally is, when once it is aroused; and to the poem considered as a poem and a study, rather than an embodiment, of certain human passions, it is far less disproportionate. Wordsworth himself passes indirectly the soundest criticism upon the play. 'Had it been the work of a later period of life, it would have been different in some respects from what it is now. The plot would have been something more complex, and a greater variety of characters introduced to relieve the mind from the pressure of incidents so mournful. The manners also would have been more attended to. My care was almost exclusively given to the passions and the character, and the position in which the persons in the drama stood relatively to each other, that the reader (for I had then no thought of the stage) might be moved, and to a degree instructed, by lights penetrating somewhat into the

depths of our nature. In this endeavour, I cannot think, upon a very late review, that I have failed.'—I. F. One cannot help recalling the anecdote related—and very likely invented—by Lamb, that Wordsworth 'says he does not see much difficulty in writing like Shakspeare, if he had a mind to try it. It is clear then nothing is wanting but the mind.' (Letter to Manning, February 26, 1808.) At any rate, Wordsworth, great poet as he was, never did produce another drama.

Introductory Note. *Some eight or ten lines:*—Cp. ll. 1539 foll., which followed the dedication of *The White Doe of Rylstone* in ed. 1836.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

P. 115. I. *March* 26, 1802:—Professor Dowden notices that 'on the same day Wordsworth worked at *The Cuckoo* (above, p. 306), which in idea may be said to be a companion-piece to this little poem, both being occupied with the carrying on of the feelings of boyhood into mature years.'

P. 115. II. To a Butterfly, l. 12. *Emmeline*—pseudonym for Dorothy, the poet's sister.

March 14, 1802:—This poem is dated 1801 in ed. 1849, and the previous poem 1804; but the date of composition of both is fixed by Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*. Cp. the other *To a Butterfly* (above, p. 161).

P. 117. IV. Foresight. *April* 28, 1802:—The last stanza was added in ed. 1815, and the third considerably altered.

P. 117. V. Characteristics of a Child three years old:—The poet's second daughter and fourth child, Catharine, born Sept. 6, 1808, died June 4, 1812. Cp. above, p. 442, *Surprised by Joy*.

P. 119. VI. Address to a Child, during a Boisterous Winter Evening, by my Sister, l. 43. *Edward:*—pseudonym for 'Johnnie, the household name of Wordsworth's first-born.'—Mr. Hutchinson.

P. 122. VIII. Alice Fell; or, Poverty. L. 57. *Duffil:*—woollen cloth of a thick nap, named from the town Duffel in Brabant.

1802:—Dated 1801 in ed. 1849; the true date is taken from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*. Wordsworth excluded the piece from edd. 1820, 1827, 1832, 'in policy,' because 'the humbleness, meanness if you like, of the subject, together with the homely mode of treating it, brought upon me a world of ridicule by the small critics.'—I. F. The incident happened to a Mr. Grahame, brother of James Grahame (1765-1811), the author of *The Sabbath* (1804), and the poem was written at Mr. Grahame's request.

Of this ballad, and *The Sailor's Mother* (above, p. 186), and *Beggars* (above, p. 318), which were all written during March 11-14, 1802, Mr. Hutchinson remarks in the course of an interesting note (*Poems in Two Volumes*, ed. 1897, vol. i. p. 189): 'We learn from Dorothy's *Journal* that on March 5 and 7, brother and sister were engaged on the revisal of the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800, of which a new edition with revised text and expanded *Preface* appeared in the early summer of 1802. Now the three ballads of March 11-14 read almost like specimen verses, composed expressly to illustrate the working of the author's principles of poetic style.'

P. 122. IX. Lucy Gray; or, Solitude:—Of this poem, founded on fact, Wordsworth says: 'The way in which the incident was treated, and the spiritualising of the character, might furnish hints for contrasting the imaginative influences, which I have endeavoured to throw over common life, with Crabbe's matter-of-fact style of handling subjects of the same kind. This is not spoken to his disparagement, far from it; but to direct the attention of thoughtful readers into whose hands these notes may fall, to a comparison that may enlarge the circle of their sensibilities, and tend to produce in them a catholic judgement.'—I. F.

P. 124. X. We are Seven, l. 4. This first stanza, with 'A little child, dear brother Jim,' or rather 'Jem,' in allusion to a friend James Tobin, who was so-called, for its first line, was thrown off by Coleridge on the afternoon during which Wordsworth had composed the rest of the poem. Wordsworth had recited his poem to his sister and Coleridge, saying that a prefatory stanza must be added, and mentioning in substance what he wished to be expressed.—From I. F. The first line stood, 'A simple child, dear brother Jim,' until 1815. The Fenwick note to this poem contains an interesting account of the genesis of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, which was planned in common during a short walking tour made by the two poets and Dorothy Wordsworth in the spring of 1798.

P. 126. XI. The Idle Shepherd-Boys; or, Dungeon-Ghyll Force, l. 20. *Rusty Hats* is a perfectly intelligible expression, but it is curious that in the Fenwick note we read, '. . . My shepherd-boys trimmed their rustic hats as described in the poem.' The whole Fenwick note is valuable as literary criticism. 'When Coleridge and Southey were walking together upon the Fells, Southey observed that, if I wished to be considered a faithful painter of rural manners, I ought not to have said that my shepherd-boys trimmed their rustic hats as described in the poem. Just as the words had passed his lips two boys appeared with the very plant entwined round their hats. I have often wondered that Southey, who rambled so much about the mountains, should have fallen into this mistake, and I record it as a warning for others who with far less opportunity than my dear friend had of know-

ing what things are, and far less sagacity, give way to presumptuous criticism, from which he was free, though in this matter mistaken. In describing a tarn under Helvellyn, I say :

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer.

This was branded by a critic of these days, in a review ascribed to Mrs. Barbauld, as unnatural and absurd. I admire the genius of Mrs. Barbauld, and am certain that, had her education been favourable to imaginative influences, no female of her day would have been more likely to sympathise with that image, and to acknowledge the truth of the sentiment.'—I. F.

P. 128. XII. Anecdote for Fathers. *'Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges'*:—This is a translation of an oracle quoted by Eusebius in his *Preparatio Evangelica*, bk. vi. ch. v., κλεῖε βίην κάρτος τε λόγων· ψευδηγόρα λέξω. In editions from 1800 to 1843 the title was *Anecdote for Fathers, showing how the Practice of Lying may be taught.* The motto was substituted for the explanation in ed. 1845.

L. 1. 'The boy was a son of my friend Basil Montagu, who had been two or three years under our care.'—I. F.

L. 10. *Kilve*:—A village on the Bristol Channel about a mile from Alfoxden.

P. 129, l. 24. *Liswyn farm*:—'A beautiful spot on the Wye, where Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and I had been visiting the famous John Thelwall, who had taken refuge from politics, after a trial for high treason, with a view to bring up his family by the profits of agriculture, which proved as unfortunate a speculation as that he had fled from.'—I. F.

P. 130. XIII. Rural Architecture, l. 3. *The height of a counsellor's bag* is not at the present day an illuminating expression ; but in Wordsworth's day (as we may gather from this passage), and even as lately as thirty or forty years ago, it would have been intelligible enough to any one who had visited a court of law. Barristers used to carry their blue or red brief-bags slung over their shoulders and hanging down their backs—a practice which has almost, if not entirely, died out. I owe this statement to a retired barrister who remembers the custom.

1800 :—Dated by Wordsworth 1801, but first published in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800.

P. 133. XV. To H. C. :—Hartley Coleridge, first-born child of the poet Coleridge, born 1796, himself the author of exquisite sonnets, died 1849.

P. 134. XVI. Influence of Natural Objects, *in calling forth and strengthening the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth.* From an unpublished poem :—From *The Prelude*, i. 401.

P. 134. *This extract is reprinted from* 'The Friend':—No. 19 (Dec. 28, 1809) of Coleridge's famous periodical.

L. 20. *The trembling lake*:—Esthwaite, the lake close to Hawkshead, where Wordsworth spent his school-days.

P. 135, l. 56. The picture presented by these lines as a whole is as vivid as possible, but the exact meaning of the expression 'spinning still the rapid line of motion' is not very clear. 'Still' must mean 'continuously,' and the idea seems to be that the continuous streaming past of the banks resembles the continuous flow of thread from the spinning-wheel. Cp. note on *An Evening Walk*, l. 48, above, p. 481.

L. 63. In *The Prelude* the line runs: 'Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.' The change is for the worse in point of sound, but Wordsworth probably felt that the substituted comparison was the more appropriate; or he may have made the alteration under the influence of his well-known dislike of the adjectival use of substantives. Cp. note on *Descriptive Sketches*, l. 238, above, p. 488.

P. 137. XVIII. The Norman Boy:—The subject of this poem was sent to me by Mrs. Ogle, to whom I was personally unknown, with a hope on her part that I might be induced to relate the incident in verse; and I do not regret that I took the trouble; for not improbably the fact is illustrative of the boy's early piety, and may concur with my other little pieces on children, to produce profitable reflection among my youthful readers. This is said, however, with an absolute conviction that children will derive most benefit from books which are not unworthy the perusal of persons of any age. I protest with my whole heart against those productions, so abundant in the present day, in which the doings of children are dwelt upon as if they were incapable of being interested in anything else. On this subject I have dwelt at length in the poem on the growth of my own mind.—I. F.

P. 140. XIX. The Poet's Dream, l. 28. A hollow dale in the burial-ground of Allonville in the Pays de Caux, which was transformed into a chapel to 'our Lady of Peace' by the Abbé du Détroit in 1696 (from Wordsworth's note).

P. 141, l. 73. The allusion is probably to Hippolyte de la Morvonnais, a French poet, who was a great admirer of Wordsworth. In an interesting contribution to Prof. Knight's Eversley edition (vol. viii. p. 429), Prof. Legouis quotes the passage of de la Morvonnais to which Wordsworth probably alludes:

> Enfant, il (Dieu) te promet le domaine de l'ange
> Si tu gardes l'amour et la foi des aïeux,
> Et sa Mère, aujourd'hui loin de l'humaine fange,
> Que tu n'as pas connue et qui t'attend aux cieux.

P. 142. XX. The Westmoreland Girl. This Westmoreland girl was Sarah Mackereth of Wyke Cottage, Grasmere.—Prof. Knight, who also quotes from a letter of Wordsworth that the poem 'is truth to the letter.'

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

P. 146. I. The Brothers, l. 65, Footnote. I have not been able to trace the prose description here referred to. The only published work of Gilbert's which is extant in the British Museum and the Bodleian, and is mentioned in his life in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.* (Supplement, vol. II.), is that containing the two curious poems *The Hurricane: a Theosophical and Western Eclogue*, and *A Solitary Effusion in a Summer's Evening* (Bristol, 1796). There is no description of the calenture either in the verse or in the prose of this volume. Gilbert was acquainted with Cottle, the Bristol publisher, and Southey and Coleridge. Southey wrote of him in a private letter, after he had disappeared and was supposed to be dead: 'He was the most insane person I have ever known at large, and his insanity smothered his genius.' Gilbert's biographer in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, Dr. Garnett, somewhat understates the case when he says that he 'gives few tokens of insanity as long as he keeps to description'; but it is certain that he gives many tokens of real, though disordered, genius. The notes which form the greater part of his volume are one of the strangest medleys of wild nonsense, curious knowledge, and occasional penetration that have ever been published: they owe their remembrance, however, to the fact that Wordsworth quoted from them a passage, which he called 'one of the finest passages of modern English prose,' in his notes to *The Excursion* (cp. vol. III. p. 554), and which 'thus conspicuously brought forward,' says Dr. Garnett, 'seems to have inspired Keats with the Darien simile in his sonnet *On opening Chapman's Homer*.'

P. 148, l. 145. The impressive circumstance here described actually took place some years ago in this country, upon an eminence called Kidstow Pike, one of the highest of the mountains that surround Haweswater. The summit of the pike was stricken by lightning; and every trace of one of the fountains disappeared, while the other continued to flow as before.—*W.* (1800).

P. 149, l. 183. There is not anything more worthy of remark in the manners of the inhabitants of these mountains, than the tranquillity, I might say indifference, with which they think and talk upon the subject of death. Some of the country churchyards, as here described, do not contain a single tombstone, and most of them have a very small number. —*W.* (1800.)

P. 153, l. 369. This line and the following differ to a considerable extent from the passage as it stood in the original. The recasting was no doubt partly due to Coleridge, who, in criticising Wordsworth's

theory of the identity of the language of prose and that of verse, wrote (*Biog. Lit.*, ch. xviii. note, p. 186, Bohn): 'In those parts of Mr. Wordsworth's works which I have thoroughly studied, I find fewer instances in which this [viz., rendering a passage unrecognisable as verse by simply transcribing it as prose] would be practicable, than I have met in many poems, where an approximation of prose has been sedulously and on system guarded against. Indeed, excepting the stanzas already quoted from *The Sailor's Mother*, I can recollect but one instance, viz., a short passage of four or five lines in *The Brothers*, that model of English pastoral, which I never yet read with unclouded eye: "James, pointing to its summit, over which they had all purposed to return together, informed them that he would wait for them there. They parted, and his comrades passed that way some two hours after, but they did not find him at the appointed place, *a circumstance of which they took no heed*: but one of them going by chance [at night] into the house, which at this time was James's house, learnt there that nobody had seen him all that day." The only change which has been made is in the position of the little word "there" in two instances, the position in the original being clearly such as is not adopted in ordinary conversation. The other words printed in italics were so marked because, though good and genuine English, they are not the phraseology of common conversation either in the word put in apposition, or in the connection by the genitive pronoun. Men in general would have said, "but that was a circumstance they paid no attention to" or "took no notice of," and the language is, on the theory of the Preface, justified only by the narrator's being the Vicar. Yet if any ear could suspect that these sentences were ever printed as metre, on those very words alone could the suspicion have been grounded.'

P. 155. II. Artegal and Elidure (*see the Chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Milton's History of England*):—This was written at Rydal Mount, as a token of affectionate respect for the memory of Milton. 'I have determined,' says he in his Preface to his *History of England*, 'to bestow the telling over even of these reputed tales, be it for nothing else but in favour of our English poets and rhetoricians, who by their wit well know how to use them judiciously.'—I. F. The reference to Milton should be book I. par. 2, and for 'wit' should be read 'art.'

L. 16. '*Who never tasted grace, and goodness ne'er had felt*':—I have not been able to trace this quotation. It does not appear to be a paraphrase of anything in Milton's *History*; nor, so far as I can find, is it an Alexandrine from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* or Thompson's *Castle of Indolence*.

P. 157, l. 92. *Poorly provided, poorly followèd.* Milton's *History*, bk. I. p. 34 (ed. 1695) has 'in a poor Habit, with only ten followers.' Wordsworth, however, appears to be making an actual quotation from some source to me unknown.

P. 161. III. To a Butterfly. *April* 20, 1802 :—The Fenwick note gives 1801 as the date of this poem ; but we know from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* that it was written on April 20, 1802. Dorothy Wordsworth speaks of it, apparently, as a 'conclusion' to the poem *To a Butterfly*, beginning, 'Stay near me,' etc. Cp. above, p. 115.

P. 162. IV. A Farewell :— For Dove Cottage, the 'little Nook of mountain-ground,' and for Wordsworth's marriage with Mary Hutchinson, to which reference is made in this poem, cp. Introd. p. xliv.

L. 22. *Gowan:*—Usually, as *e.g.* in *Auld Lang Syne* ('and pu'd the gowans fine'), translated 'daisy,' but obviously not to be so translated here. Wordsworth almost certainly means the Globe-flower (*Trollius Europæus*), known in Scotland as the Lucken-gowan. See Jamieson's *Scottish Dictionary*, sub voc. Gowan, where any obstinate persuasion that gowan must mean daisy will be dispelled. Of Globe-flowers Robinson (*English Flower-Garden*) says : 'They may be grown in beds or borders, or naturalised by ponds, streams, or in any wet place.' The corn-marigold, which might equally well or even more appropriately have been called 'gowan' by Wordsworth (see Jamieson, *loc. cit.*), cannot here be meant, because it is too dark to be called 'saffron,' it does not grow in such a locality as Wordsworth describes, and it does not flower at the same time of year as the marsh-marigold. In writing this note, for *Selected Poems of William Wordsworth*, I was much indebted to my friend Mr. A. P. P. Keep, of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-law.

P. 163, l. 56. *Of which I sang one song that will not die :—The Sparrow's Nest*, see above, p. 116.

P. 163. V. Stanzas. *Written in my Pocket-copy of Thomson's Castle of Indolence :*—The subject of the first four stanzas is Wordsworth himself, that of the next three, Coleridge. Matthew Arnold, misled, probably, by some careless quotations of De Quincey, as well as by a certain superficial appropriateness of some of the phrases in the earlier stanzas to the much-suffering Coleridge, has helped to popularise the error of supposing that Coleridge is the subject of the first four, Wordsworth of the next three stanzas. In a letter to Prof. Knight, however, he avows the correct belief. Cp. Knight's *Wordsworth* (Eversley Series), vol. ii. p. 310 ; Dowden's *Wordsworth* (Aldine), vol. i. p. 383. This poem, apart from its intrinsic beauty, is of importance as correcting a widespread illusion, that Wordsworth was of a somewhat dispassionate or phlegmatic temperament. Cp. the early part of *Resolution and Independence*, above, p. 328, and Dorothy Wordsworth's frequent references in her *Journal* to the poet's excitability in, and nervous prostration after, composition. The poem should be read in connection with *The Castle of Indolence*. Mr. Hutchinson well remarks (*Athenæum*, Dec. 15, 1894, quoted by Knight, *loc. cit.*) that the stanzas 'are meant to be read as though they were an afterthought of James Thomson's. Their

author, therefore, has rightly imparted to them the curiously-blended flavour of "romantic melancholy and slippered mirth," of dreamlike vagueness and smiling hyperbole, which forms the distinctive mark of Thomson's poem.' Mr. Hutchinson and the late Canon Ainger have also pointed out the resemblance between Wordsworth's description of himself and Beattie's *Minstrel*. Prof. Knight adds: 'It is somewhat curious that Dorothy Wordsworth, writing to Miss Pollard from Forncett in 1793, quotes the line from *The Minstrel*, bk. I. st. 22: "In truth he was a strange and wayward wight," and adds, "That verse of Beattie's *Minstrel* always reminds me of him, and indeed the whole character of Edwin resembles much what William was when I first knew him after leaving Halifax."'

P. 165, l. 58. Mr. Hutchinson has called my attention to the fact that the word 'deftly' is glossed in north-country dialect dictionaries as 'softly, gently.' The word 'lightly' would form a bridge between this and the more universal use of the word.

P. 165. VI. Louisa. *After accompanying her on a Mountain Excursion:*—There is room for doubt with regard to both the date of this poem and the identity of the person named. It was dated by Wordsworth 1805, but he told Miss Fenwick that the poem *To a Young Lady* (above, p. 368), which was published in Feb. 1802, was written 'at the same time' as this one. It seems probable that the two were written between Dec. 1800 and Oct. 1801, during which time we have no Journal of Dorothy Wordsworth. The date, however, is not likely to be fixed, unless we can fix the identity of the person named Louisa. The most plausible conjecture on the latter point is that of Mr. Hutchinson (in his reprint (1897) of the *Poems in Two Volumes* of 1807; cp., too, Mr. W. Hale White, *Wordsworth and Coleridge MSS.*, p. 46), based on Wordsworth's practice of choosing pseudonyms metrically equivalent to the real name thus veiled. He thinks that Louisa stands for Joanna Hutchinson, who in 1801 was twenty-one years of age. Prof. Knight thinks that Dorothy Wordsworth is meant, Mr. Ernest Coleridge, Mary Hutchinson, afterwards the poet's wife.

L. 12. I follow Mr. Hutchinson's example in printing this stanza in the text, though for some strange and unexplained reason, it was omitted in ed. 1845 and subsequent editions.

P. 167. IX. 1799:—So dated by Wordsworth, but perhaps not written till after the publication, in 1800, of the other *Lucy* poems. The first notice that we have of this poem is in the printer's copy of the 1802 ed. of *Lyrical Ballads*, from which edition, however, it was omitted, apparently by accident. It was first published in 1807. Cp. *A description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge MSS. in the possession of Mr. T. Norton Longman*, by W. Hale White, p. 45.

P. 168. XI. To ——:—Prompted by the undue importance attached to

personal beauty by some dear friends of mine.—(I. F.) 'No doubt addressed to the poet's daughter Dora. See *The Longest Day*, stanza xvi.' —Mr. Hutchinson. Cp. above, p. 137.

P. 169, l. 20. *'To draw, out of the object of his eyes':*—Prof. Knight refers to Lyly's *Endymion*, v. 3:

To have him in the object of mine eyes.

But Wordsworth is probably quoting here and two lines below from some source at present unknown. The common juxtaposition of 'object' and 'eye' might be illustrated by many quotations from Shakespeare: cp. e.g. *Midsummer's Night's Dream*, IV. i. 175:

The object and the pleasure of mine eye
Is only Helena.

P. 169. XII. The Forsaken. *Published* 1842:—This was an overflow, as Wordsworth tells us in the Fenwick note, from *The Affliction of Margaret* ——. For the date see note to that poem below, p. 506.

P. 171. XIV. A Complaint:—Written at Town-End, Grasmere. Suggested by a change in the manner of a friend.—I. F. The friend was doubtless Coleridge, who returned from Malta in 1806. This was the period when the old complete union between Coleridge and Wordsworth became subjected to many slight and some grave shocks, and passed into a friendship, always deep and sincere, as the friendship of two men of such high ideals could not fail to remain, but shadowed by much trouble and anxiety. The best account of the relations between Wordsworth and Coleridge is given in the *Life of Coleridge* by the late Mr. Dykes Campbell. Coleridge's MS. notebooks (cp. the extracts printed by Mr. E. H. Coleridge under the title *Anima Poetæ*, pp. 131, 169, quoted by Mr. Hutchinson in *Poems in Two Volumes*, II. 217), Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journals*, and the recently published letters of D. W. to Mrs. Clarkson (*Athenæum*, 1904, Jan. etc.) are the principal sources of our information on the subject.

P. 171. XV. To —— :—Mrs. Wordsworth.—I. F.

P. 172. XVI. *Published* 1845:—The date of composition is unknown; but it seems probable that the poem was suggested by the preceding one, and in particular by the second stanza, excised in the ed. of 1845, which ran as follows:

Such if thou wert in all men's view,
A universal show,
What would my Fancy have to do,
My Feelings to bestow?

P. 172. XVII., l. 1. *How rich that forehead's calm expanse:*—Suggested by a print at Coleorton Hall.—I. F.

L. 8. *An Angel from his station:*—Wordsworth obviously alludes to Dryden's line in *Alexander's Feast*:

She drew an angel down.

P. 173. XIX. To ——:—To Mrs. Wordsworth.—I. F.

L. 8. *'Sober certainties':*—Cp. *Comus,* l. 263, 'Such sober certainty of waking bliss.'

P. 175. XX. Lament of Mary Queen of Scots *on the Eve of a New Year,* l. 66. *'From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear'* is taken, with some loss, from a discarded poem, *The Convict,* in which occurred, when he was discovered lying in the cell, these lines:

But now he upraises the deep-sunken eye,
The motion unsettles a tear;
The silence of sorrow it seems to supply
And asks of me—why I am here.—I. F.

The Convict is given below, vol. iii. p. 419.

P. 175. XXI. The Complaint *of a Forsaken Indian Woman.* Hazlitt, in *My First Acquaintance with Poets,* says:—'. . . Coleridge read aloud, with a sonorous and musical voice, the ballad of *Betty Foy.* I was not critically or sceptically inclined. I saw touches of truth, and nature, and took the rest for granted. But in *The Thorn, The Mad Mother,* and *The Complaint of a poor Indian Woman,* I felt that deeper passion and pathos, which have since been acknowledged as the characteristics of the author; and the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me. It had to me something of the effect that arises from the turning up of the fresh soil, or the first welcome breath of spring.' *The Mad Mother* was the earlier title of the poem *Her Eyes are Wild,* above, p. 230. For *The Thorn,* see above, p. 332.

P. 181. XXIII. Repentance. *A Pastoral Ballad,* l. 28. Prof. Knight quotes from Wordsworth's MSS. several variations from the published text of this poem: among them the following, which avoids the somewhat artificial phrase 'if night had been sparing of sleep':

When my sick, crazy body had lain without sleep,
How cheering the sunshiny vale where I stood.

P. 181. XXIV. The Affliction of Margaret ——:—This was taken from the case of a poor widow who lived in the town of Penrith.—I. F.

P. 183. *Published* 1807:—Dated by Wordsworth 1804: but in the MS. printer's copy for the ed. of 1807, after the title *The Affliction of Mary* (*sic*) —— *of* ——, is the note in brackets: 'Written for the *Lyrical Ballads.*' Then follow some prefatory verses, which were not published (cp. *A Description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge MSS.,* etc., p. 63). From these facts Mr. Hutchinson seems to be justified in dating this poem 'some years earlier' than 1804. The inference applies also to *The Forsaken,* above, p. 169.

P. 186. Maternal Grief. *Published* 1842:—Written probably about 1810, being, as the Fenwick note tells us, 'in part an overflow from the

Solitary's description of his own and his wife's feelings upon the decease of their children.' Cp. *The Excursion*, bk. III.

P. 186. XXVII. THE SAILOR'S MOTHER This poem, written about the same time as *Alice Fell, The Emigrant Mother*, and *Beggars*, represents Wordsworth at the extreme of his theory of poetic realism, as the Fenwick note indicates: 'I met this woman near the Wishing-gate, on the high road that then led from Grasmere to Ambleside. Her appearance was exactly as here described, and such was her account, nearly to the letter.' Mr. Hutchinson (*Poems in Two Volumes*, I. 171) calls stanzas iii. and iv. 'a *reductio ad absurdum* of the fallacies propounded by Wordsworth in the famous Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800.' Ll. 14-16 originally stood:

With the first word I had to spare
I said to her, 'Beneath your cloak
What 's that which on your arm you bear?'

Ll. 19-21 were restored in ed. 1832 to their present, and original, form at the instigation of Barron Field (who became Wordsworth's friend through having been in the India Office with Charles Lamb, and compiled memoirs of Wordsworth which were never published). In promising the restoration, Wordsworth wrote: 'I suppose I had objected to the first line, which, it must be allowed, is rather flat.'—Knight, *Life*, III. (xi.) 152. In ed. 1820 he had substituted:

I had a Son—the waves might roar,
He feared them not, a Sailor gay!
But he will cross the waves [deep, ed 1827] no more.

Ll. 23-24 are the final form of the following original:

And I have been as far as Hull, to see
What clothes he might have left, or other property.

P. 187. XXVIII. THE CHILDLESS FATHER, l. 12. *One Child*:—Prof. Knight notes that in the list of *errata* in ed. 1820 'one' is corrected to 'a'; 'but the text remained "one child" in all subsequent editions.' This was probably an oversight.

P. 189. XXIX. THE EMIGRANT MOTHER, ll. 55-64. This stanza originally stood as follows:

'Tis gone—forgotten—let me do
My best—there was a smile or two,
I can remember them, I see
The smiles, worth all the world to me.
Dear Baby! I must lay thee down;
Thou troublest me with strange alarms;
Smiles hast thou, sweet ones of thy own;
I cannot keep thee in my arms,
For they confound me: as it is,
I have forgot those smiles of his.

Coleridge (*Biog. Lit.*, ch. ix.) criticised the expressions 'let me do my best' and 'as it is' as samples of a 'characteristic, though only occasional, defect, which,' he says, 'I appear to myself to find in these poems,' viz., 'the inconstancy of the style'; under which name he referred to 'the sudden and unprepared transitions from lines or sentences of peculiar felicity (at all events striking and original) to a style, not only unimpassioned, but undistinguished.' The first two lines were altered to their final form in ed. 1820. The last two were several times rehandled: 'For they bewilder me—even now *His* smiles are lost,—I know not how!' (1820); 'By those bewildering glances crost In which the light of his is lost' (1827); final text 1836. The change of 'sweet' to 'bright' (ed. 1827) in l. 61 is one of a large number of instances of Wordsworth's expulsion of that insinuating epithet.

P. 197. XXX. Vaudracour and Julia. 1804:—Dated by Wordsworth 1805, but written, as he says, 'as an episode' in the work afterwards called *The Prelude*. Book ix. of *The Prelude*, to which part it belonged (cp. *Prelude*, ix. 553, where the first four lines of *Vaudracour and Julia* are quoted), was apparently written in the winter of 1804. Cp. Prof. Knight's introductory note to *The Prelude, Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. iii. pp. 123-127. (In that note on p. 124, l. 9, for 1805 read 1804: and correct p. 125, fourth paragraph, which wrongly contradicts par. 2.)

P. 197. XXXI. The Idiot Boy:—'Alfoxden, 1798. The last stanza, "The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo, And the sun did shine so cold," was the foundation of the whole. The words were reported to me by my dear friend Thomas Poole; but I have since heard the same repeated of other idiots. Let me add, that this long poem was composed in the groves of Alfoxden, almost extempore; not a word, I believe, being corrected, though one stanza was omitted. I mention this in gratitude to those happy moments, for, in truth, I never wrote anything with so much glee.' —I. F. No poem of Wordsworth excited so much scorn as this: the best known expression of such scorn being Byron's lines in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. In spite of many touches of imaginative genius, and in spite of its psychological insight and fidelity to nature, the poem is undoubtedly marred for many sympathetic readers by the garrulousness and the clumsy attempt at gaiety which pervades it. Coleridge (*Biog. Lit.*, ch. xvii.) further points out acutely how the picture of the mother detracts from the interest of the situation—a point seized by Byron when he wrote, 'The idiot mother of an idiot boy.' Coleridge says: 'The two following charges seem to me not wholly groundless; at least, they are the only plausible objections which I have heard to that fine poem. The one is, that the author has not, in the poem itself, taken sufficient care to preclude from the reader's fancy the disgusting images of ordinary, morbid idiocy, which yet it was by no means his

intention to represent. He has even by the "burr, burr, burr," uncounteracted by any preceding description of the boy's beauty, assisted in recalling them. The other is, that the idiocy of the boy is so evenly balanced by the folly of the mother, as to present to the general reader rather a laughable burlesque on the blindness of senile dotage, than an analytic display of maternal affection in its ordinary workings.' The former of these objections was urged in a letter to Wordsworth in 1802 by John Wilson (Christopher North), then a lad of seventeen, and evoked a reply, containing an exposition of Wordsworth's point of view with regard to idiocy in a noble passage which is perhaps more effective than the poem itself. There is only space here for one paragraph, but the whole letter should be read in Wordsworth's *Prose Works* or in the *Memoirs*, edited by Chr. Wordsworth. 'I have often applied to idiots, in my own mind, that sublime expression of Scripture that '*their life is hidden with God.*' They are worshipped, probably from a feeling of this sort, in several parts of the East. Among the Alps, where they are numerous, they are considered, I believe, as a blessing to the family to which they belong. I have, indeed, often looked upon the conduct of fathers and mothers of the lower classes of society towards idiots as a great triumph of the human heart. It is there that we see the strength, disinterestedness, and grandeur of love; nor have I ever been able to contemplate an object that calls out so many excellent and virtuous sentiments without finding it hallowed thereby, and having something in me which bears down before it, like a deluge, every feeble sensation of disgust and aversion.' In the same letter Wordsworth says that a friend (probably Coleridge: see quot. above) had advised him 'to add a stanza describing the person of the Boy, entirely to separate him in the imagination of my readers from that class of idiots who are disgusting in their persons; but the narration in the poem is so rapid and impassioned, that I could not find a place in which to insert the stanza without checking the progress of it, and [so leaving] a deadness upon the feeling.' Except the omission of two stanzas near the beginning, the alterations in *The Idiot Boy* are comparatively few and unimportant.

P. 198. l. 39. This line originally stood: 'Has up upon the saddle set.' In a letter to Barron Field in 1828 Wordsworth writes (whether referring to a suggestion of Field or not, is uncertain): '"Across the saddle" is much better. So "up towards," instead of "up upon" in *Michael* (l. 456).' Neither of these emendations, however, occur in the published texts. This line in *The Idiot Boy* was altered to its present form in ed. 1836, and so was l. 456 in *Michael.*

P. 209. XXXII. Michael: A Pastoral Poem, l. 2. *Greenhead Ghyll* is 'a steep, narrow valley, with a stream running through it' (see note to *The Idle Shepherd Boys*), coming down from the Fairfield at the north-east of the vale of Grasmere. The ruins of a sheepfold, possibly that referred to in the poem, may still be seen, some considerable way

up the valley. In the Fenwick note Wordsworth says : 'The sheepfold, on which so much of the poem turns, remains, or rather the ruins of it.'

P. 212, l. 139. 'The character and circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged many years before the house we lived in at Town-End (Dove Cottage). . . . The name of the Evening Star was not in fact given to this house, but to another on the same side of the valley, more to the north.'—I. F. In a letter to his friend Tom Poole, Wordsworth said that in the character of Michael he had Poole's character often before his eyes. *Thomas Poole and his Friends*, by Mrs. Sandford, vol. ii. p. 56.

P. 213, l. 192. This and the following lines to 'daily hope' (192-206) were, by an extraordinary error, omitted from the first ed. (1800), half a page being left blank. The omission was repaired by the issue of a list of *errata* early in 1801.

P. 214, l. 258. *Richard Bateman* :—The story alluded to here is well known in the country. The chapel is called Ings Chapel ; and is on the right hand side of the road leading from Kendal to Ambleside.—W. The chapel was an old one which Richard Bateman rebuilt in 1743. Cp. *The Topographical Dictionary of England*, by Samuel Lewis, vol. II., referred to by Prof. Knight.

P. 219. l. 482. Some interesting fragments, partly used and partly discarded in the making of this poem, are given from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journals* by Prof. Knight, *Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. VIII. pp. 223 foll.

P. 220. XXXIII. The Widow on Windermere Side. 1837 :—This date was given by the Rev. R. P. Graves, who, when curate at Bowness, supplied Wordsworth with the facts recorded in the poem.—Prof. Knight.

P. 222. XXXIV. The Armenian Lady's Love, l. 52. *Ne'er assoil my cobwebb'd shield:*—This use of the word 'assoil' is, so far as I know, without parallel. It seems doubtful whether Wordsworth meant 'set free from the cobwebs' or 'absolve from the excommunication, as it were, of disuse.' There is no similar use quoted in the *New Eng. Dict.*

P. 227. XXXVI. Farewell Lines :—'These lines were designed as a farewell to Charles Lamb and his sister, who had retired from the throngs of London to comparative solitude in the village of Enfield.'—I. F. Lamb retired to Enfield in 1825, and died in 1834. From a letter of his to the Rev. H. F. Cary and from Crabb Robinson's diary we gather that Wordsworth was in London in May and June 1828, in which latter month he also went for a short tour on the Continent.

L. 1. *High bliss is only for a higher state:*—Cp. Thomson, *To the Rev. Patrick Murdoch*, l. 10.—Prof. Knight.

P. 228. XXXVII. The Redbreast. (*Suggested in a Westmoreland Cottage*), l. 31. *Hers:* — In the original edition (1835) Wordsworth

printed 'his,' and similarly in the following lines. In his latest edition (1845) he replaced the masculine by the feminine. The invalid in his mind was not really a 'child,' as in l. 38, but his sister Dorothy, in whose sick-room one of the redbreasts, which frequented Wordsworth's house and garden, took up its abode, as the Fenwick note tells us.

P. 229, l. 70. Wordsworth italicised *lilt* as used, not in its ordinary meaning of 'sing with a merry swing,' but in its north-dialect use of 'move with a merry swing.' Cp. *New. Eng. Dict.*

P. 230. XXXVIII. Her Eyes are Wild. The title of this poem, as it originally appeared in *Lyrical Ballads*, was *The Mad Mother*. Prof. Knight quotes Coleridge (letter to Godwin, Dec. 9, 1800): 'For myself I would rather have written *The Mad Mother* than all the works of all the Bolingbrokes and Sheridans, those brilliant meteors, that have been exhaled from the morasses of human depravity since the loss of Paradise.' Mr. Hutchinson points out the strong influence of the beautiful ballad, *Lady Bothwell's Lament* ('Balow, my babe, ly still and sleipe,' etc., Percy's *Reliques*, orig. ed., vol. II. p. 194, also in the *Oxford Book of English Verse* and other anthologies), upon Wordsworth, and refers to Wordsworth's remark in the *Essay, supplementary to the Preface of* 1800: 'I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the *Reliques*; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.'

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

P. 233. I. This poem was suggested on the banks of the brook that runs through Easdale, which is in some parts of its course as wild and beautiful as brook can be. I have composed thousands of verses by the side of it.—I. F.

P. 234, l. 39. *Emma:*—Pseudonym for Dora, *i.e.* Dorothy Wordsworth, as Emmeline, in *To a Butterfly*, above, p. 115.

P. 234. II. To Joanna:—Joanna Hutchinson, sister of the poet's wife. 'The effect of her laugh is an extravagance' (I. F.), and, according to Mr. Hutchinson, the opening lines too, if rightly understood, are 'merry banter.'

P. 236. III., l. 1. *Eminence:*—called Stone-Arthur. It could not be seen, as is stated in l. 3 of this poem, from the orchard of Dove Cottage.

P. 237. IV., l. 5. *Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy:*—The character of the eastern shore of Grasmere was altered, in Wordsworth's lifetime, by the high road being carried along it.

P. 238. V. To M. H.:—Mary Hutchinson, afterwards the poet's wife.

P. 239, l. 7. The pool alluded to is in Rydal Upper Park.—I. F.

P. 241. V. 1802 :—Dated 1802 in edd. 1815, 1820; 1805 in ed. 1836 and later editions. The original draft probably dates from 1800, and is spoken of in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal.* The poem was perhaps retouched in 1805, the year of John Wordsworth's death. It was published in 1815.

P. 242. VII., l. 9. *Two adventurous Sisters:*—Mrs. Wordsworth and Sarah Hutchinson. The 'two heath-clad Rocks' are on the left of the lower road from Grasmere to Rydal, where it turns eastwards along the course of the Rotha.

L. 18. Sarah Hutchinson died in 1835.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

P. 243. I. A Morning Exercise, l. 16, Footnote :—This well-known book was published in 1825, reviewed by Sydney Smith in the *Edinburgh Review,* and reached a second edition in 1828. Cp. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

P. 244, ll. 43-48. This stanza was originally part of the poem *To a Skylark* (cp. above, p. 353), with which Wordsworth said he 'could wish the last five stanzas of this poem to be read.'—I. F.

L. 52. *I.e.* in open, bare country. That this is Wordsworth's meaning is clear from the reading of ed. 1832: 'Where earth resembles most his blank domain!'

L. 60. Prof. Knight compares Addison's Hymn ('The spacious firmament on high'), last couplet:

> For ever singing as they shine,
> 'The Hand that made us is divine!'

The collocation of words may have been present to Wordsworth's consciousness or sub-consciousness; but it is scarcely necessary to point out that the use to which he puts them is quite different.

P. 244. II. A Flower Garden. *At Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire:*—Sir George Beaumont's place, where Wordsworth helped to lay out the garden.

P. 246. III. ll. 21-22. These lines originally (till ed. 1815) stood:

> And all those leaves that jump and spring,
> Were each a joyous, living thing.

And the poem closed with the following lines:

> 'Oh! grant me, Heaven, a heart at ease,
> That I may never cease to find,
> Even in appearances like these,
> Enough to nourish and to stir my mind!'

P. 247. IV. The Waterfall and the Eglantine, l. 15. Prof. Knight compares Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*:

> And now the storm-blast came, and he
> Was tyrannous and strong:

of which line Wordsworth's phrase was probably an unconscious echo.

P. 248. V. The Oak and the Broom: *a Pastoral:*—Both this poem and the preceding are connected with the mountain path that leads from Rydal to Grasmere under Nab Scar. They are well illustrated by Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal for Apr. 23, 1802, quoted by Prof. Knight (*Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. II. p. 172)—the passage which contains the phrase, 'We left William sitting on the stones, feasting with silence.'

P. 252. VII. To the Daisy. *G. Wither:—The Shepherd's Hunting, Eclogue*, iv. 366-378. In l. 3 Wordsworth misquoted 'instruction' for 'invention,' in l. 4 'the' for 'her.' The extract was first prefixed to this poem in ed. 1815, being perhaps suggested by Charles Lamb, with whom *The Shepherd's Hunting* was 'prime favourite' amongst Wither's poems. —Prof. Knight, quoting Dykes Campbell.

P. 254, ll. 73-80. In ed. 1815 this stanza stood as follows:

Child of the year! that round dost run
Thy course, bold lover of the sun,
And cheerful when the day 's begun
As morning Leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Dear shalt thou be to future men
As in old time; thou not in vain
Art Nature's Favourite.

P. 256. IX. The Green Linnet, l. 40. The first and last stanzas of this poem, one of the most perfect of Wordsworth's shorter pieces—'an elegant poem, as this is generally allowed to be,' as he calls it in a letter to Barron Field in 1828—were, in their original forms, severely handled by Jeffrey (*Edinburgh Review*, vol. XI.), and by the author of *The Simpliciad*, an anonymous satire, possibly, according to Mr. Hutchinson's acute suggestion, to be attributed to a certain Mr. French referred to by Southey (Knight's *Life*, II. (x.) 98. Hutchinson's edition of *Poems in Two Volumes*, I. xviii.). The first stanza was originally:

The May is come again:—how sweet
To sit upon my Orchard-seat!
And Birds and Flowers once more to greet,
My last year's Friends together:
My thoughts they all by turns employ;
A whispering Leaf is now my joy,
And then a Bird will be the toy
That doth my fancy tether.

This was rewritten in 1815 in its final form, except that 'flowers' and 'birds' were transposed in ed. 1827. The last stanza stood originally:

While thus before my eyes he gleams,
A Brother of the Leaves he seems;
When in a moment forth he teems
His little song in gushes:
As if it pleas'd him to disdain

And mock the Form which he did feign,
While he was dancing with the train
Of Leaves among the bushes.

In ed. 1820 the last line but two became:

The voiceless Form he chose to feign.

In ed. 1827 the stanza was rewritten:

My sight he dazzles, half deceives,
A Bird, so like the dancing Leaves;
Then flits, and from the Cottage eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

In the letter referred to above (Knight's *Life*, III. (xi.), 153), Wordsworth writes: 'The stanza, as you have been accustomed to quote it, is very faulty. "Forth he teems" is a provincialism: Dr. Johnson says "a low word, when used in this sense." But my main motive for altering this stanza was the wholly unjustifiable use of the word "train," as applied to leaves "attached" to a tree. A train of "withered" leaves, driven in the wind along the gravel, as I have often seen them, sparkling in April sunshine, might be said. "Did feign" is also an awkward expletive for an elegant poem, as this is generally allowed to be.' Wordsworth's treatment of this poem is typical of his readiness to benefit by criticism; on which subject Mr. Hutchinson has some excellent remarks in his Introduction to *Poems in Two Volumes.*

P. 257. X. To a Skylark. 1805:—1805 was the date assigned by Wordsworth, and as there is no proof to the contrary I have thought it best to leave it. In the original edition (1807) the poem was the second of a group of five, labelled *Poems, composed during a tour, mostly on foot*, three of which (*Beggars, Alice Fell, Resolution and Independence*) were certainly composed at Grasmere in 1802; the other, *With how Sad Steps*, probably belongs to about the same date. The 'tour' of the title seems to have been purely imaginary, or to refer solely to rambles at home. The poem originally ended (from l. 25):

Joy and jollity be with us both!
Hearing thee, or else some other,
As merry a Brother,
I on the earth will go plodding on,
By myself, chearfully, till the day is done.

The Simpliciad ridiculed the 'Brother,' along with similar 'fraternal overtures to beast and bird' (Mr. Hutchinson, *Poems in Two Volumes*, p. 170), on the part of Coleridge (*Address to a Young Jackass*) and Wordsworth. In ed. 1820 Wordsworth substituted a new stanza, almost in its final form, for the last four lines of the original, and in ed. 1827

omitted the bulk of the rest (ll. 8-25), writing to Barron Field in 1828 (Knight's *Life*, III. (xi.), 154): 'After having succeeded so well in the second *Skylark*, and in the conclusion of the poem entitled *A Morning Exercise*, in my notice of this Bird, I became indifferent to this poem, which Coleridge used severely to condemn, and to treat contemptuously. I like, however, the beginning of it so well, that for the sake of that I tacked to it the respectably-tame conclusion. I have no objection, as you have been pleased with it, to restore the whole piece. Could you improve it a little?' It is perhaps worth noticing that the 'respectably-tame conclusion' of 1820 distinctly suggests in style and rhythm the 'successful' *Skylark* of 1825.

P. 260. XII. To the Same Flower, ll. 41-48. This stanza, in the form which follows, appeared first in the 1836 ed. of the previous poem, and was transferred to its present place in the ed. of 1845:

Drawn by what peculiar spell,
By what charm for sight or smell,
Do those wingèd dim-eyed creatures,
Labourers sent from waxen cells,
Settle on thy brilliant features,
In neglect of buds and bells
Opening daily at thy side,
By the seasons multiplied?

L. 50. '*Beneath our shoon*':—cp. Milton's *Comus*, ii. 634-635:

Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon.—Knight.

Ll. 51-53 stood originally:

Let, as old Magellan did,
Others roam about the sea;
Build who will a pyramid.

In 1828 Wordsworth promised Barron Field to restore 'Old Magellan.'

P. 260. XIII. The Seven Sisters; *or, The Solitude of Binnorie*:—The story of this poem is from the German of Frederica Brun.—W. Cp. 'The Cruel Sisters' in Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

P. 262. 1800:—Dated by Wordsworth 1804, but almost certainly referred to in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* under the date August 17, 1800.

P. 263. XV. The Redbreast chasing the Butterfly. 1802:—Misdated by Wordsworth 1806. The correct date is gathered from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*.

P. 264. XVII. Hint from the Mountains *for certain Political Pretenders*:—'The verses were written in 1817, but the application is for all times and places.'—I. F. Wordsworth's letters about this time are largely devoted to politics, and are full of his growing fear of reform;

his 'poetic work during the years 1816 and 1817 was mainly inspired by the political events of the hour' (Knight's *Life*, II. (X.), 284).

P. 265. XVIII. On Seeing a Needlecase in the Form of a Harp. *The work of E. M. S.*:—Edith May Southey, daughter of the poet.

L. 10. *Arachne*:—A mortal maiden who challenged Athena to a trial of skill with the needle; for which insolence she was changed into a spider.

P. 268. XX. 1842:—'A MS. copy of this fragment in Wordsworth's handwriting, 31st Dec. 1842, fixes the date approximately.'—Knight, Eversley ed. VIII. 154.

P. 269. XXI. The Contrast. *The Parrot and the Wren*, l. 46. *Darkling*:—This word seems to be of Wordsworth's own coinage. His use of it has escaped the notice of the compilers of the *New Eng. Dict.*, which gives: 'Darkling: sb. nonce-wd. [*i.e.* word used *for the nonce*]. A child of darkness; one dark in nature or character': with two quotations from a MS. poem by J. Ross, called *Fratricide* (1773).

P. 269. XXII. The Danish Boy. *A Fragment*:—It was entirely a fancy; but intended as a prelude to a ballad-poem never written.—I.F. The similarity of this poem in rhythm and metre to *The Thorn* is noticeable, the only difference in metre being the absence of rhyme in ll. 1 and 3 of the stanza in *The Thorn*. There is a similarity of style too, if we allow for the very different motives of the two poems, especially in the following stanza, which stood last but one in ed. 1800, but was not republished:

When near this blasted tree you pass,
Two sods are plainly to be seen
Close at its root, and each with grass
Is cover'd fresh and green.
Like turf upon a new-made grave
These two green sods together lie,
Nor heat, nor cold, nor rain, nor wind,
Can these two sods together bind,
Nor sun, nor earth, nor sky;
But side by side the two are laid
As if just sever'd by the spade.

P. 272. XXIV. Stray Pleasures, l. 34. *Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss*:—Prof. Knight and Mr. Hutchinson quote Drayton, *The Muse's Elysium*, nymphal VI. 4-7:

The wind had no more strength than this,
That leisurely it blew,
To make one leaf the next to kiss,
That closely by it grew.

Drayton was one of the 'older writers' whom Wordsworth especially admired; cp. the note to *At the Grave of Burns*, vol. II. p. 483.

P. 277. XXVIII. Love lies Bleeding, l. 1. *Amaranthus:* of which one variety is *Amaranthus melancholicus ruber.*

Published 1842 :—This poem was originally written, in sonnet form, in 1833. It was probably altered to its present form in 1842. The sonnet is printed in Prof. Knight's Eversley ed., vol. viii. p. 150.

P. 281. XXXI. The Kitten and Falling Leaves, l. 104. *Dora:*—Dora Wordsworth, born 1804, died 1847. In editions previous to that of 1849 the pseudonym Laura stood for Dora here.

P. 282. XXXII. Address to my Infant Daughter, Dora, l. 15. *'Heaven's eternal year':*—Cp. Dryden, *To the pious memory of the accomplished young lady, Mrs. Anne Killigrew,* l. 15.—Prof. Knight.

P. 284. XXXIII. The Waggoner. *Motto:*—Thomson, *The Seasons:* 'Summer,' ll. 977-979. Part of Charles Lamb's reply to Wordsworth's dedication may be quoted: 'You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem. I mean all through; yet "Benjamin" is no common favourite; there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it. . . . I do not know which I like best, the Prologue (the latter part specially) to *P. Bell*, or the Epilogue to *Benjamin.* Yes, I tell stories; I do know. I like the last best; and the *Waggoner* altogether is a pleasanter remembrance to me than the *Itinerant.* If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so.' (*Letter to Wordsworth*, June 7, 1819.) The text of *The Waggoner* was considerably altered, especially in the earlier half, for ed. 1836, but a good many of the alterations were cancelled in ed. 1845. It was a favourite poem with its author, though regarded, justly, as a less ambitious work than *Peter Bell*, with which indeed it has, in motive, nothing in common. After hovering, in different editions, between the 'Poems of the Fancy' and those of 'the Affections,' it found its place at the end of the former, just as *Peter Bell* closed the 'Poems of the Imagination.'

Canto First, l. 3. When the poem was first written, the note of the bird was thus described:

> The Night-hawk is singing his frog-like tune,
> Twisting his watchman's rattle about—

but from unwillingness to startle the reader at the outset by so bold a mode of expression, the passage was altered as it now stands.—W.

Dorhawk:—The goat-sucker or nightjar; so-called, perhaps from its pursuit of buzzing flies and beetles, for which the onomatopœic word 'dorr' is an old generic name, or from its own buzzing sound referred to by Wordsworth here, and in the poem *Calm is the fragrant Air*, l. 22:

> The busy dor-hawk chases the white moth
> With burring note.

P. 286, ll. 58, 59. *Where the Dove and Olive-bough*
Once hung, a Poet harbours now.

I.e. at Dove Cottage.

P. 288, l. 171. *Sage Sidrophel:*—Sidrophel is the name of the astrologer and 'Rosicrucian' in Butler's *Hudibras,* Part II. Canto iii.

P. 289, ll. 199, 200. *And somewhere, as he thinks, by crashes Among the rocks:—I.e.* and astounded by crashes somewhere, as he thinks, among the rocks. Before ed. 1836 ll. 197-200 were somewhat clearer in construction, though l. 198 was not nearly so good:

By peals of thunder, clap on clap!
And many a terror-striking flash;—
And somewhere, as it seems, a crash
Among the rocks; etc.

L. 214. Tradition associates a cairn of stones by the top of the pass of Dunmail Raise, at the boundary of Cumberland and Westmoreland, with the name of Dunmail or Domhnall, the last king of Cumberland, who was dispossessed in 945 A.D., when, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'King Eadmund harried over all Cumberland, and gave it all up to Malcolm King of the Scots, on the condition that he should be his ally by sea and land.' In Burn's *Westmoreland and Cumberland* a choice of conjectures is given: 'A great heap or *raise* of stones . . . thrown together in ancient time, either by Dunmaile, sometime king of Cumberland, as a mark of the utmost border of his kingdom, or by some other in remembrance of his name, for some memorable act done by him there, or some victory obtained over him.' Mr. W. G. Collingwood in the *Victorian History of Cumberland* (I. 291) remarks that the cairn cannot mark the grave of Dunmail, as he died in Rome much later than 945; he adds: 'The cairn seems to have been opened long ago without much result.'

P. 291. *Canto Second,* ll. 14, 15. This couplet originally stood:

Proceeding with an easy mind;
While he, who had been left behind . . .

'The old Familiar of the seas' was introduced in 1836. This use of 'Familiar' is not quite the same as the common use—'familiar spirit,' though the phrase may have been suggested by Shakespeare, *Henry VI.* III. ii. 122, 'I think her old familiar is asleep.' It should have been given in *New Eng. Dict.* as the instance of the sense, 'one intimately acquainted with a thing,' instead of Lowell's obvious imitation of it in his essay on Wordsworth, 'The life-long familiar of the mountains.'

L. 22. *The Cherry Tree:*—Now a farmhouse on the Helvellyn side of the road.—Prof. Knight.

P. 294, ll. 128-134. Prof. Knight well compares *Tristram Shandy* (bk. IX. ch. xxviii.): 'And this, said he, is the town of *Namur*—and this the citadel—and there lay the *French*—and here lay his honour and myself.'

P. 295. *Canto Third,* l. 28. After the line, *Can any mortal clog come to her?* followed in the MS. an incident which has been kept back. Part of the suppressed verses shall here be given as a gratification of private feeling, which the well-disposed reader will find no difficulty in excusing. They are now printed for the first time:

Can any mortal clog come to her?
It can . . . . .
. . . . . .
But Benjamin, in his vexation
Possesses inward consolation;
He knows his ground and hopes to find
A spot with all things to his mind,
An upright mural block of stone,
Moist with pure water trickling down.
A slender spring, but kind to man
It is, a true Samaritan;
Close to the highway, pouring out
Its offering from a chink or spout;
Whence all, howe'er athirst, or drooping
With toil, may drink, and without stooping.
Cries Benjamin, 'Where is it, where?
Voice it hath none, but must be near.'
A star declining towards the west,
Upon the watery surface threw
Its image tremulously imprest,
That just marked out the object and withdrew:
Right welcome service! . . . .
. . . . . .
Rock of Names!
Light is the strain, but not unjust
To thee and thy memorial-trust,
That once seemed only to express
Love that was love in idleness;
Tokens as year hath followed year,
How changed, alas, in character!
For they were graven on thy smooth breast
By hands of those my soul loved best;
Meek women, men as true and brave
As ever went to a hopeful grave:
Their hands and mine, when side by side,
With kindred zeal and mutual pride,
We worked until the Initials took
Shapes that defied a scornful look.—
Long as for us a genial feeling
Survives, or one in need of healing,
The power, dear Rock, around thee cast,
Thy monumental power, shall last
For me and mine! O thought of pain,
That would impair it or profane!
Take all in kindness then, as said
With a staid heart but playful head;

And fail not then, loved Rock ! to keep
Thy charge when we are laid asleep. —W.

The 'rock' stood in a spot now submerged in Thirlmere, in consequence of the raising of the level of that lake by the Manchester waterworks. It was destroyed in an attempt to remove it to a place higher up the hillside. The 'names' were those of Wordsworth, his wife, his sister, his brother John, Coleridge, and Sarah Hutchinson.

P. 298. *Canto Fourth*, l. 17. The Greta issues from the north-west end of Thirlmere, near Raven-crag.

L. 21. *Ghimmer-crag:*—There is no rock in the district now called by this name. The rock referred to by Wordsworth is probably that called Fisher-crag.—Prof. Knight.

P. 299, l. 37. *Nathdale Fell:*—Between the valley of the Naddle (Nathdale) beck and that of St. John.

L. 46. *Blencathara:*—The mountain better known as Saddleback, near Skiddaw. For the allusion to Sir Lancelot Threlkeld, see the *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, above, p. 345.

L. 61. *Castrigg* or Castlerigg is the ridge between the Naddle valley and Keswick.

Ll. 75-82 were added in ed. 1836, almost in their present form, which actually dates from ed. 1845.

P. 304, l. 269. Several years after the event that forms the subject of the poem, in company with my friend, the late Mr. Coleridge, I happened to fall in with the person to whom the name of Benjamin is given. Upon our expressing regret that we had not, for a long time, seen upon the road either him or his waggon, he said: 'They could not do without me; and as to the man who was put in my place, no good could come out of him; he was a man of no *ideas*.' The fact of my discarded hero's getting the horses out of a great difficulty with a word, as related in the poem, was told me by an eye-witness.—W. The epilogue, addressed to Charles Lamb, was doubtless added in 1819.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

P. 305. I. THERE WAS A BOY:—These lines were afterwards incorporated in *The Prelude*, bk. v. 364-397. There is no record of the name of the boy referred to by Wordsworth, though one of his schoolfellows, William Raincock of Rayrigg, is mentioned in the Fenwick note to this poem as having taken the lead in the act referred to in l. 7 and foll. William Raincock, however, did not die in childhood, but proceeded from Hawkshead to St. John's College, Cambridge, like Wordsworth himself.

L. 25. In a letter written by Coleridge on the receipt of this poem (Dec. 10, 1798), we read:

'. . . that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake,

I should have recognised anywhere; and had I met these lines, running

wild in the deserts of Arabia, I should have instantly screamed out, "Wordsworth!"'

L. 28. The vale of Esthwaite, with its village of Hawkshead, in which the churchyard is as here described.

P. 306. II. To THE CUCKOO. Ll. 5-8. This stanza originally stood:

While I am lying on the grass,
I hear thy restless shout;
From hill to hill it seems to pass
About and all about!

In ed. 1815, evidently to displace 'shout':

Thy loud note smites my ear!—
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near!

In 1820:

It seems to fill the whole air's space

replaced the third line, Wordsworth desiring to emphasise the mysterious ubiquity of the sound. This he attempted to push still further in ed. 1827 by writing:

Thy twofold shout I hear,
That seems to fill the whole air's space,
As loud far off as near.

Here he fortunately recovers 'shout,' and gives l. 2 ease of movement. Barron Field objected to 'As loud far off as near,' and Wordsworth, while saying that he had written it 'in consequence of my noticing one day that the voice of a cuckoo, which I had heard from a tree at a great distance, did not seem any louder when I approached the tree,' restored the previous reading, at the same time purging the stanza of the ugly third line.

1802:—Dated by Wordsworth 1804, but the real date is fixed by Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, March 23-26, 1802. As Mr. Hutchinson notes, 'these stanzas are clearly modelled on Logan's address *To the Cuckoo*'; about two months after their composition D. W. notes, June 3: 'The cuckoo sang in Easedale; after dinner we read the life and some of the writings of poor Logan.'

P. 307. III. A NIGHT-PIECE:—As Prof. Knight notices 'The indebtedness of the poet to his sister is nowhere more conspicuous than in this poem. In Dorothy Wordsworth's *Alfoxden Journal* the following occurs, under date 25th Jan. 1798: "Went to Poole's after tea. The sky spread over with one continuous cloud, whitened by the light of the moon, which, though her dim shape was seen, did not throw forth so strong a light as to chequer the earth with shadows. At once the clouds seemed to cleave asunder, and left her in the centre of a black-blue vault. She sailed along, followed by multitudes of stars, small, and bright, and sharp. Their brightness seemed concentrated (half-moon)."'

P. 307. IV. Airey-Force Valley. *Airey-Force:* — The waterfall commonly, and elsewhere by Wordsworth, called Aira Force, is near the western shore of Ullswater, rather more than two miles from the head of the lake.

P. 308. V. Yew Trees:—The Lorton Yew-tree has long been a mere wreck, and, since a great storm on Dec. 11, 1883, the four Borrowdale Yews have been in the same plight.

Ll. 25-28. Professor Dowden suggests that Wordsworth had in mind the description of the 'ghostly shapes' at the 'vestibule of Hell' in Virgil's *Æneid*, vi. 273 foll.

P. 310. VII. The Simplon Pass, l. 20. Extracted from *The Prelude*, bk. vi. ll. 621-640. Dated by Wordsworth 1799 (date of beginning of *The Prelude*), but bk. vi., as a whole, was written in 1804. There seems, however, no reason to doubt but that these lines, like *Nutting*, were composed by themselves, and only subsequently, like *There was a Boy*, but unlike *Nutting*, incorporated in *The Prelude*.

P. 310. VIII., l. 1. *She:*—Refers to Wordsworth's wife. Cp. Introduction, p. xxix, and *The Prelude*, bk. xiv., ll. 268-270.

P. 311, l. 22. It is true, as Prof. Knight remarks, that 'the progress of mechanical industry . . . has given a more limited, and purely technical meaning to the word, than it bore when Wordsworth used it'; and he well compares *Hamlet*, ii. ii. 124, 'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him.' He also quotes from the Epilogue to *The Waggoner*, but there the 'machine' is the waggon itself; and this, *i.e.* a vehicle, was the most ordinary meaning of the word in the eighteenth century. The *New Eng. Dict.* gives us better illustrations in Garth's *Dispensary*, v. 54:

> And shall so useful a machin as I
> Engage in civil Broyls, I know not why?

And Addison, *Spectator*, No. 387: 'Cheerfulness . . . is the best Promoter of Health. Repinings . . . wear out the Machine insensibly. There is no doubt, however, that Wordsworth risked something for the sake of the analogy between the intimate knowledge which the engineer obtains of his machine, as compared with the more superficial acquaintance of the outsider, and his own growth in intimate knowledge of his wife.

P. 311. IX., l. 2. *'Fiery heart':—King Henry VI.*, III. i. iv. 87:

> What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails
> That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?—Prof. Knight.

In the original ed. (1807) 'fiery heart' was not between inverted commas. The epithet was ridiculed in *The Simpliciad* (1808), and in ed. 1815 Wordsworth wrote 'a creature of ebullient heart.' Fortunately, he returned to the original reading in 1820, adding, however, the quotation marks. (From Mr. Hutchinson's reprint of *Poems in Two Volumes*, vol. ii. p. 188.)

1807:—Dated by Wordsworth 1806, but Mrs. Wordsworth added to the Fenwick note 'at Coleorton,' where the Wordsworths lived from Nov. 1806 to the summer of 1807.

P. 313. XI. 1799:—This poem originally appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800, together with the two other 'Lucy' poems, *Strange fits of passion*, and *She dwelt among th' untrodden ways*. The preceding poem, *Three years she grew* also appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800, but not in the same group. The fifth poem of the set, *I travelled among unknown men*, though dated by Wordsworth 1799, did not appear till the *Poems* of 1807.

P. 313. XII., ll. 21, 22. This couplet:

They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,

was written by Wordsworth's wife. He called them 'the two best lines.' —From I. F.

P. 317. XVI. Written in March, *while resting on the Bridge at the foot of Brother's Water*:—Brother's Water lies at the foot of the Kirkstone Pass at the head of Patterdale. These lines were really written on April 16th (Good Friday), in the course of a walk with Dorothy Wordsworth, described in her *Journal*.

P. 318. XVIII. Beggars, l. 18. *'A weed of glorious feature'*:—From Spenser's *Muiopotmos*, stanza 27.—Prof. Knight.

P. 319, l. 48. This poem underwent considerable alterations in ed. 1827, and subsequently. Cp. Wordsworth's letter to Barron Field in Prof. Knight's *Life* (iii. (xi.) p. 150), in which he explains his alterations of ed. 1827.

P. 319. XIX. Sequel to the Foregoing. *Composed Many Years After*. L. 2. *Dædal earth*:—This expression, somewhat unlike Wordsworth's usual diction, is an instance of that traditional 'poetic diction' which he had once too sweepingly condemned. It occurs in Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, iv. x. 45, and elsewhere, and is transferred from *Lucretius*, i. 7, *dædala tellus*, 'the various earth,' 'earth with all its variety of shows,' etc.

P. 321. XX. Gipsies, l. 28. There is a well-known criticism of this poem in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, ch. xxii., which was based on the original ed. of 1807, and especially on the closing lines, which, instead of ll. 21-28 in the ultimate ed., were:

Oh, better wrong and strife,
Better vain deeds and evil than such life!
The silent Heavens have goings on;
The stars have tasks—but these have none.

The four concluding lines of the text were added in 1820. Wordsworth promised Barron Field in 1828 to cancel them (Prof. Knight's *Life*, iii. (xi.) p. 154).

P. 321. XXI. RUTH, ll. 13-18. This stanza was added in ed. 1802, in which edition there were several alterations, and some large additions. In subsequent editions there were a good many changes and sometimes reversions to the original text.

P. 322, l. 19. The description of Georgia in this poem is taken from Bartram's *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia*, etc. (1791). The frontispiece of that work was a portrait of an Indian chief, wearing feathers such as the youth is rather strangely represented as wearing in Ruth's Somersetshire home. Cp. note of Mr. Ernest Coleridge in Prof. Knight's Eversley ed. vol. II. p. 108.

P. 326, ll. 196-198. Originally:

> And there, exulting in her wrongs,
> Among the music of her songs
> She fearfully carouz'd.

Writing to Barron Field in 1828, Wordsworth says: 'This was altered [ed. 1820:

> And there she sang tumultuous songs,
> By recollection of her wrongs
> To fearful passion roused],

Lamb having observed that it was not English. I liked it better myself; but certainly to "carouse cups"—that is, to empty them—is the genuine English.' Modern lexicography discloses that the transitive and intransitive uses of 'carouse' are equally genuine English. Cp. *New Eng. Dict.* Lamb was probably thinking of *Othello*, II. iii. 55, where Roderigo

> To Desdemona hath to-night carrows'd
> Potations, pottle-deep.

L. 214. *Banks of Tone*:—In Somersetshire. The poem was written during Wordsworth's sojourn in Germany, after he had been living at Alfoxden.

P. 328. XXII. RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE:—This poem, always spoken of by Dorothy Wordsworth as *The Leech-Gatherer*, was composed May 3-7, 1802, worked over again on May 9, and 'finished' again on July 4. The entries in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* for those dates are good examples of the fatigue to which composition often subjected the poet even in some of his most inspired and felicitous work. Coleridge, in the *Biog. Lit.* (1817), ch. xxii., after criticising the 'inconstancy' or 'disharmony' of certain passages in which exaggerated 'matter-of-factness' went side by side with striking language or images, writes: 'Indeed this fine poem is *especially* characteristic of the author. There is scarce a defect or excellence in his writings of which it would not present a specimen.' After stanza viii. came originally the following, which was one passage criticised by Coleridge, and was omitted in ed. 1820:

> My course I stopped as soon as I espied
> The old Man in that naked wilderness:

Close by a Pond, upon the further side,
He stood alone: a minute's space I guess
I watch'd him, he continuing motionless:
To the Pool's further margin then I drew;
He being all the while before me full in view.

Similarly after stanza xi. there stood in the MS. copy which Wordsworth sent to Coleridge the following, which was never published:

He wore a Cloak, the same as women wear,
As one whose blood did needful comfort lack:
His face look'd pale, as if it had grown fair:
And, furthermore, he had upon his back,
Beneath his cloak, a round and bulky Pack;
A load of wool or raiment, as might seem;
That on his shoulders lay as if it clave to him.

There are some interesting remarks of Wordsworth on this poem in a letter given in the *Memoirs* by his nephew (i. 172-173), quoted by Knight, *Eversley Wordsworth*, ii. 322.

P. 329, l. 45. *Him who walked in glory and in joy:*—Robert Burns.

P. 330, ll. 90-91. Originally:

He answer'd me with pleasure and surprise;
And there was, while he spake, a fire about his eyes.

The fine change was made in ed. 1820:

He answer'd, while a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

P. 332. XXIII. The Thorn:—It is probable, as Prof. Knight suggests (vol. i. p. 334, Eversley ed.), that this poem owes something to Bürger's *Pfarrer's Tochter*, a translation of which by William Taylor, called *The Lass of Fair Wone*, appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* (1796). The parson's daughter in that poem being betrayed by a lover of higher rank, murders her babe, and buries him beside 'the pond of toads,' beside which she is herself hanged. The actual stimulus to composition was, however, given by a thorn and a 'little muddy pond' on the hill above Alfoxden. Cp. Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal for Mar. 19, 1798. In the Advertisement to the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth wrote: 'The poem of *The Thorn*, as the reader will soon discover, is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently show itself in the course of the story.' In a note to ed. 1800 he suggests a retired 'captain of a small trading vessel' as the kind of person who becomes 'credulous and talkative from indolence.' From the very first it has been pointed out, by friend and foe alike, that the 'retired captain' is a mere shadow, and his loquacity only another name for the weakness of parts of a poem which is in imaginative power and in occasional felicities a very fine poem. Mr. Hutchinson in his reprint of *Lyrical Ballads* (pp. 238, foll.), quotes the interesting criticisms of Coleridge (*Biog. Lit.* ch. xvii.) and of Swinburne (in the

Nineteenth Century for April and May 1884), and enforces them with interesting remarks of his own, noticing especially that the changes which Wordsworth made in the text 'consist with few exceptions in the substitution of refined and poetical, and therefore dramatically incongruous lines or phrases, for phrases rude and prosaic indeed, but for that very reason dramatically true and proper.'

Ll. 32-33. These two lines were substituted in ed. 1820 for the following, which had been severely criticised, but which were certainly suitable enough to the supposed narrator, the loquacious mariner:

I 've measured it from side to side:
'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

P. 334, l. 103. In edd. 1798-1815 there followed eleven lines of loquacious directions which were omitted in ed. 1820, two stanzas being rolled into one.

L. 105. Martha Ray was the name of the mother of Wordsworth's friend, Basil Montagu; and Basil Montagu was with Wordsworth on the walk when Wordsworth noticed the thorn. It seems, therefore, impossible to suppose that Wordsworth happened upon the name either by accident or in forgetfulness of its connection with his friend. The real Martha Ray was mistress of the fourth Earl of Sandwich, and was shot by a disappointed lover, the Rev. James Hackman.

P. 338. XXIV. Hart-Leap Well. Written at Town-End, Grasmere. The first eight stanzas were composed extempore one winter evening in the cottage, when, after having tired myself with labouring at an awkward passage in *The Brothers*, I started with a sudden impulse to this to get rid of the other, and finished it in a day or two.—I. F.

P. 339, l. 40. Until ed. 1820 this line stood:

And foaming like a mountain cataract.

The change, obviously to a more appropriate image, necessitated the unimportant change, but also a change for the better, of 'act' into 'feat' in l. 38.

P. 341, l. 97. *Moving Accident:*—Obviously an allusion to *Othello*, I. iii. 135:

Of moving accidents by flood and field.

P. 343, l. 168. Till ed. 1815:

For them the quiet creatures whom he loves.

P. 343. XXV. Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, *upon the restoration of Lord Clifford, the Shepherd, to the estates and honours of his ancestors:*—Cp. *The White Doe of Rylstone*, canto i., with this poem, both for matter and manner. Prof. Knight, *Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. IV. pp. 91-97, gives full historical and topographical notes.

Ll. 9-10. Prof. Knight and Mr. Hutchinson compare *Hudibras*, part II. canto i. 567-568:

That shall infuse eternal spring
And everlasting flourishing.

P. 344, l. 27. *Earth helped him with the cry of blood:*—This line is from *The Battle of Bosworth Field,* by Sir John Beaumont (brother of the dramatist).—W.

The line is:

The earth assists thee with the cry of blood.

L. 46. *She that keepeth watch and ward:*—Appleby Castle.

P. 345, l. 73. *Carrock-fell,* in Cumberland.

L. 90. *Blencathara:*—Otherwise known as Saddleback, close to Skiddaw. Mosedale and the river Glenderamakin are on the north side of Blencathara.

L. 95. *Sir Lancelot Threlkeld:*—Father-in-law of Henry, Lord Clifford, the hero of the poem.

P. 346, l. 123. *Bowscale-tarn:*—In one of the hollows of Blencathara. Allusion is made to a local superstition.

Ll. 142, 143. The martial character of the Cliffords is well known to the readers of English history; but it may not be improper here to say, by way of comment on these lines and what follows, that besides several others, who perished in the same manner, the four immediate progenitors of the person, in whose hearing this is supposed to be spoken, all died in the field.—W.

P. 347. XXVI. Lines, *composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour, July* 13, 1798:—I have not ventured to call this poem an ode; but it was written with a hope that in the transitions, and the impassioned music of the versification, would be found the principal requisites of that species of composition.—W.

P. 350, l. 106. The line occurs in *Night Thoughts,* vi. 427 (ed. Gilfillan, 1853): 'And half-create the wondrous world they see.'

P. 351. 1798:—No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol.—I. F.

P. 351. XXVII:—Prof. Dowden compares the latter part of this poem with the lines 'If thou indeed derive thy light from heaven,' written more than ten years later. Cp. above, p. lxxii.

P. 351. XXVIII. French Revolution. *As it appeared to enthusiasts at its commencement. Reprinted from 'The Friend'*:—See *The Prelude,* bk. xi. ll. 105-144.

P. 352, XXIX. l. 4. In the original ed. (1807) there followed:—

Whence the Voice? from air or earth?
This the Cuckoo cannot tell;
But a startling sound had birth,
As the Bird must know full well;

Like the voice through earth and sky
By the restless Cuckoo sent. . . .

P. 353. XXX. To a Skylark :—This poem originally consisted of three stanzas, the second of which, 'To the last point of vision and beyond,' etc., was transferred in ed. 1845 to the poem called *A Morning Exercise.* See above, pp. 244 and 512.

P. 353. XXXI. Laodamia. *Laodamia* (1814) was a new departure for Wordsworth; and it is curious that on the one hand it was in itself so great a success, and, on the other, it was followed by no other important poem definitely inspired by classical antiquity except *Dion* (1816). Charles Lamb very naturally wrote (1815): '*Laodamia* is a very original poem; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation.' The influence of classical literature on Wordsworth is perceived on close acquaintance to be much greater than a superficial view of his poetry would lead one to suspect; but about these years (1814-1820) the education of his eldest son, John, led Wordsworth to refresh his memory of the classics, especially Virgil: and one result of this was that he translated the first three books of the *Æneid* into English rhymed heroic verse, part of one book of which was published in *The Philological Museum* (vol. I. p. 382), see below, vol. III. p. 427. *Laodamia* is full of imitations and adaptations of classical phrase and allusion, drawn especially from the sixth book of the *Æneid*, but also from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, and Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis.* These are all fully explained in an extremely interesting note contributed by Mr. Heard to Prof. Knight's *Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. VI. pp. 10 foll.; but, as Mr. Heard points out, the poem, containing Virgil's conception of *pietas, i.e.* love of God and man issuing in dutifulness, with 'the Platonic repudiation of sensuous and material life' (which also inspired Virgil), 'is notable, not so much for the assimilation of details, as for natural affinity to the spirituality of antiquity, of which Virgil is the purest exponent.' *Laodamia* was at first placed among the 'Poems founded on the Affections,' and was transferred, with *Ruth* and some others, to the 'Poems of the Imagination' to supply the gap made by the collection of the Scottish poems into one group. Cp. letter to Crabb Robinson, 1826. Knight's *Life*, XI. (iii.) p. 129. Wordsworth said of the poem: 'It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written.'—I. F. The text was little altered after publication, except the important change at the end.

P. 356, ll. 101, 102. Originally ll. 101, 102 stood:

Spake, as a witness, of a second birth
For all that is most perfect upon earth.

Landor criticised the expression 'second birth' as the language of the conventicle; and, although Wordsworth defended himself in a letter to

Landor in 1824 (Knight's *Life*, xi. (iii.) 95), the text was changed, much for the better, in ed. 1827.

P. 357, l. 132. This touch is from Homer's *Iliad*, ii. 700:

τοῦ δὲ καὶ ἀμφιδρυφὴς ἄλοχος Φυλάκῃ ἐλέλειπτο
καὶ δόμος ἡμιτελής.

where, however, δόμος ἡμιτελής probably does not refer to 'unfinished towers,' but to the incompleteness of his married life, being without children.

Ll. 158-163. This stanza was originally of a contrary and less austere purport:

Ah, judge her gently, who so deeply loved
Her, who, in reason's spite, yet without crime,
Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
Delivered from the galling yoke of time
And these frail elements—to gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

The change of purport was made in ed. 1827, when the stanza ran thus:

By no weak pity might the Gods be moved;
She who thus perished not without the crime
Of Lovers that in Reason's spite have loved,
Was doomed to wander in a grosser clime,
Apart from happy Ghosts—that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet, 'mid unfading bowers.

In ed. 1832 'wander in a grosser clime' gave place to 'wear out her appointed time,' the notion of a period of purgatory being thus definitely introduced, quite in harmony with the general conception of the sixth *Æneid*.

P. 358. XXXII. Dion. *(See Plutarch)*:—Wordsworth's treatment of the story as told by Plutarch is fully explained by Mr. Heard in the *Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. vi. pp. 125 foll. Wordsworth not only derives his subject from Plutarch, but adopts several touches in detail from him; but, as Mr. Heard says, 'Plutarch's biography deals mainly with the external conditions, and is overlaid with so much historical detail that the personality of Dion stands out in insufficient relief. Wordsworth gives us a study of the internal struggle, showing us the failure of an ideal, not in its external aspect, but as closing the aspirations, and desolating the conscience, of a truly noble mind.'

The poem originally, and until ed. 1837, began with the following stanza, which was displaced 'on account of its detaining the reader too long from the subject, and as rather precluding than preparing for the due effect of the allusion to the genius of Plato.'—W.:

Fair is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing
O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's lake,
Bears him on while proudly sailing
He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake:

Behold ! the mantling spirit of reserve
Fashions his neck into a goodly curve ;
An arch thrown back between luxuriant wings
Of whitest garniture, like fir-tree boughs
To which, on some unruffled morning, clings
A flaky weight of winter's purest snows !
—Behold !—as with a gushing impulse heaves
That downy prow, and softly cleaves
The mirror of the crystal flood,
Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,
And pendent rocks, where'er, in gliding state,
Winds the Mute Creature without visible Mate
Or Rival, save the Queen of night
Showering down a silver light,
From heaven, upon her chosen Favourite !

Besides the excision of this passage, which Wordsworth refused to restore in spite of the request of some of his friends (I. F.) the changes in the published text of *Dion* were few and slight. Prof. Knight quotes a large number of variants existing in MS., showing that this poem, like *Laodamia*, was composed with much anxious labour. *Dion* was originally included in the 'Poems of Sentiment and Reflection.'

P. 362. The Pass of Kirkstone, l. 19. *Raised :*—Professor Knight (*Eversley Wordsworth*) and Mr. Hutchinson (*Oxford Wordsworth*) print 'razed,' which first appeared in ed. 1857, according to Prof. Knight's note. There does not seem to be sufficient reason for the alteration. There is no more difficulty in the expression to *raise* one's camp than in that of *raising* a siege. As a matter of fact, though Wordsworth was not the man to pay attention to such a matter, the words 'raise' and 'raze,' as is usual in such cases, show a considerable interaction in their use by earlier writers. Cp. *New Eng. Dict.*

P. 365. XXXIV. To Enterprise, l. 94. *Calentured :*—Wordsworth appears to use this word, which is extremely rare as a verb, and only found elsewhere in the sense of 'inflame' or 'be inflamed,' to mean 'imaged as to a man in a calenture.' The peculiarity of the delirious fever known as the calenture is that the patient imagines the sea to be green fields and desires to tread upon it ; there is therefore a certain appropriateness, though hardly a strict propriety, in Wordsworth's use of the expression.

Stanza iii. :—This stanza was added in ed. 1827.

P. 366, l. 116.

. . . awhile the living hill
Heaved with convulsive throes, and all was still.

Dr. Darwin describing the destruction of the army of Cambyses.—W. The lines are from *The Botanic Garden*, Part i. *The Economy of Vegetation*, canto ii. ll. 497, 498.

P. 367. *Between* 1820 *and* 1822 :—Wordsworth tells us that this poem,

published in 1822, arose out of *The Italian Itinerant*, written in 1820. Cp vol. II. p. 98.

P. 367. XXXV. To ——. *On her first ascent to the summit of Helvellyn*:—The lady was Miss Blackett, then residing with Mr. Montagu Burgoyne at Fox-Ghyll.—I. F.

P. 368, l. 25. *Choral*:—In ed. 1832 and subsequent edd. the word was printed 'coral': evidently a misprint. Prof. Dowden first restored the correct reading of edd. 1820 and 1827.

L. 30. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 736 foll.

P. 368. XXXVI. To a Young Lady, *Who had been reproached for taking Long Walks in the Country*:—Cp. *Louisa*, above, p. 65 and note, p. 504.

P. 369. XXXVII. Water Fowl:—Dated 1812 by Wordsworth. First published in the fourth ed. (1823) of his *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes*, etc. (originally prefixed to Wilkinson's *Select Views*, etc.) one of several additions to that volume made after its first separate appearance in 1822. The lines form part of *The Recluse*, Book I., the incomplete beginning of the great work of which *The Excursion* was to have been the second and middle part. Wordsworth was at work on the part of *The Recluse* to which these lines belong as early as 1800, and his date 1812 may be a mistake, of himself or of the press, in ed. 1849.

P. 371. XXXIX. The Haunted Tree. *To* ——:—Prof. Knight conjectures that this poem was inscribed to the poet's daughter Dora, who would be about fifteen years old at the time of its composition.

P. 372. XL. The Triad, l. 13. *Mount Ida's triple lustre*:—Wordsworth refers to the contest for the prize of beauty between the three goddesses, Hera, Pallas, and Aphrodite, adjudged by the Shepherd Paris on Mount Ida, near Troy.

L. 18. The three *Sisters in the bond of love*, were Edith Southey (born May 1, 1804), Dora Wordsworth (born Aug. 16, 1804), and Sara Coleridge (born Dec. 22, 1802), and they are summoned in that order. There is an extremely interesting criticism of the poem in Sara Coleridge's *Memoirs*, vol. II. p. 410.

L. 21. *Fair progeny of Jove*:—*I.e.* the Three Graces who are almost always represented in ancient poetry and works of art as dancing with their hands or arms 'interweaved.'

P. 374, l. 117. *Flower of the winds*:—The anemone or wind-flower.

P. 375, l. 137. '. . . A most unintelligible allusion to a likeness discovered in dear Dora's contour of countenance to the great Memnon head in the British Museum, with its overflowing lips and width of mouth, which seems to be typical of the ocean.'—Sara Coleridge, *Memoirs*, ii. 410.

P. 377. XLI. The Wishing-Gate. *Introductory Note*:—Having been told, upon what I thought good authority, that this gate had been

destroyed, and the opening, where it hung, walled up, I gave vent immediately to my feelings in these stanzas. But going to the place some time after, I found, with much delight, my old favourite unmolested.—W. The Wishing-gate, or rather its successor, still stands.

P. 380. XLII. The Wishing-Gate Destroyed. *Published* 1842:—We have no means of dating the composition of this poem; but it seems likely to have been written after the edition of 1832 was brought out, as the preceding poem appeared in that edition, and there is no obvious reason why this poem should have been left out if it already existed. Prof. Knight dates it, no doubt by inadvertence, 1828.

P. 380. XLIII. The Primrose of the Rock:—The rock stands on the right hand a little way up the middle road leading from Rydal to Grasmere. We have been in the habit of calling it the glow-worm rock from the number of glow-worms we have often seen hanging on it as described. —(I. F.).

P. 387. XLVI. Devotional Incitements. *Motto:—Paradise Lost,* v. 78-80:

> . . . not to Earth confined,
> But sometimes in the Air, as we; sometimes
> Ascend to Heaven.

P. 390. XLVII. The Cuckoo-clock, l. 33. *Wandering:*—Italicised by Wordsworth with reference to his own expression in *To the Cuckoo*:

> O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
> Or but a wandering Voice?

'In connection with this stanza it may be noted that the cuckoo-clock was not stopped during Wordsworth's last illness. He died "just," Mrs. Cookson said, "when the cuckoo-clock was singing noon."—Knight's *Life,* III. (xi.) 439.'—Prof. Dowden. The clock was a gift of Miss Fenwick, as we learn from the Fenwick note.

P. 391. XLVIII. To the Clouds, l. 55. *A little hoary line and faintly traced:*—Prof. Knight cps. 'When to the attraction of the busy world,' l. 48 (see above, p. 239), 'A hoary pathway traced between the trees.'

P. 392, l. 77. The Cyclades are the group of islands in the Ægean which surround Delos. The expression 'a Cyclades' is Wordsworth's own coinage, and only less strange than 'a Pleiades' would be because the Cyclades are less familiar than the Pleiades to English ears.

L. 82. *Worshipped as the god of verse:—I.e.* as Apollo.

P. 392. XLIX. Suggested by a Picture of the Bird of Paradise, l. 9. 'Glendoveer' was Southey's adaptation of *Grandouver,* the name for a beautiful kind of spiritual being (such as the Sylphs) in Sonnerat's *Voyage aux Indes* (1782). So in *The Curse of Kehama,* VI. ii.:

> The Glendoveer,
> The loveliest race of all of heavenly birth.

The word can scarcely be said to have had a life, but it was extinguished by the parody in the *Rejected Addresses*, beginning:

I am a blessèd Glendoveer.

P. 395. LI. On the Power of Sound, l. 27. Wordsworth doubtless refers to the bell-bird of Brazil, the Campanero (*Procnias carunculata*). There is also an Australian bell-bird (*Myzantha melanophrys*). See *New Eng. Dict.*, which curiously quotes no use of the word earlier than Bishop Stanley, 1848.

P. 396, l. 73. *Pageant:*—Italicised by Wordsworth, probably to show at once that he means mimic war.

P. 398, l. 121. Cp. *Upon the same occasion* (Sept. 1819), ll. 31 foll., vol. II., p. 361.

L. 126. *Hell to the lyre bowed low:*—Referring to the recovery of Eurydice by Orpheus by the power of his lyre.

Ll. 129-131. Amphion was supposed to have charmed the stones by his music into building the city of Thebes by themselves.

L. 144. Referring to the constellation of the Dolphin.

L. 146. *Mœnalian:—i.e.* Arcadian.

L. 153. This somewhat emphatic injunction is addressed to the reader merely as a transition: cp. Argument at the beginning of the poem. The want of spontaneity and organic unity is only rather more apparent here than elsewhere in this ode.

L. 159. *'The vain distress-gun':*—This quotation has not, so far as I know, been traced. A similar expression occurs in a poem by Milman, *The Loss of the Royal George*, contributed to a volume edited in 1823 by Joanna Baillie, stanza 10:

Was heard on Denmark's wintry shore
The drear distress-gun moaning.

I owe this quotation to the *New Eng. Dict.*, where, however, it is attributed to Joanna Baillie.

P. 399, l. 179. *Sages:—i.e.* the Pythagoreans.

P. 400, l. 218. An echo of *Ode—Intimations of Immortality*, etc., l. 153:

. . . power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence.

1828-1829:—Dated 1828 by Wordsworth; but in the Fenwick note he tells us that the lines beginning 'Then to be heard, lone eagle!' (199 foll.), were suggested near the Giant's Causeway in the course of his carriage tour with Mr. J. Marshall. This tour took place in the late summer and autumn of 1829.

PETER BELL

A Tale

'What's in a Name?'—Romeo and Juliet, II. ii.

'Brutus will start a Spirit as soon as Cæsar':—Julius Cæsar, I. ii.

P. 405, l. 164. The White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) which grows mainly in Canada, from which it is greatly exported as timber for indoor use. It does well in the south of England in light soil. Probably there was one in the grounds at Alfoxden, where *Peter Bell* was written. It is rather curious (cp. l. 156 above) that in *The Prelude* (iv. 47) Wordsworth speaks of

. . . the sunny seat
Round the stone table under the dark pine

in the garden of the cottage at Hawkshead where he lived in his school-days.

P. 406, l. 195. The alterations in the text of *Peter Bell* are few, considering the length of the poem. For the most interesting one see the next note but one. The opening of Part First was altered in ed. 1820 with a view to toning down its realism. In ed. 1819 it stood :

All by the moonlight river side
It gave three miserable groans ;
'Tis come then to a pretty pass,'
Said Peter to the groaning Ass,
'But I will *bang* your bones !'

'Good Sir !'—the Vicar's voice exclaim'd,
'You rush at once into the middle' ;
And little Bess, with accent sweeter,
Cried, 'O dear Sir ! but who is Peter ?'
Said Stephen,—''Tis a downright riddle !'

The Squire said, 'Sure as paradise
Was lost to man by Adam's sinning,
This leap is for us all too bold ;
Who Peter was, let that be told,
And start from the beginning.'

In first altering the passage Wordsworth went to the opposite extreme. Omitting the second of these stanzas, and altering the first to its final form, he ran on the sense of it with exaggerated language, perhaps intended to be mock-heroic, but evidently felt afterwards to be infelicitous. The stanzas stood thus :

All by the moonlight river side
Groaned the poor Beast—alas ! in vain ;
The staff was raised to loftier height,
And the blows fell with heavier weight
As Peter struck—and struck again.

Like winds that lash the waves, or smite
The woods, the autumnal foliage thinning—
'Hold !' said the Squire, 'I pray you hold !' etc.

The final text was reached in ed. 1836. There are one or two alterations with the same purpose in other parts of the poem.

P. 413, l. 450. In the original edition the first stanza of Part First was repeated here (see last note) with the following stanza added :

And Peter halts to gather breath ;
And now full clearly was it shown
(What he before in part had seen)
How gaunt was the poor Ass and lean,
Yea, wasted to a skeleton !

The former stanza was omitted in ed. 1820. The final text was reached in ed. 1836.

P. 414, l. 515. In the two earliest editions (both 1819) there followed this stanza :

Is it a party in a parlour?
Cramm'd just as they on earth were cramm'd—
Some sipping punch, some sipping tea,
But, as you by their faces see,
All silent and all damn'd !

Shelley prefixed this stanza to his *Peter Bell the Third.* Wordsworth told Barron Field (letter of 1828): 'This stanza I omitted—though one of the most imaginative in the whole piece—not to offend the pious.' Prof. Knight, by an unfortunate slip, says that 'Crabb Robinson remonstrated with him against its exclusion.' The reverse is true. On first reading *Peter Bell* (in MS.) in 1812, Robinson wrote in his diary (Knight's *Life*, II. (x.), p. 200): 'Peter Bell contains one passage, so very exceptionable, that I ventured to beg him to expunge it. . . . Mrs. Basil Montagu told me she had no doubt she had suggested this image to Wordsworth by relating to him an anecdote. A person walking in a friend's garden, looking in at a window, saw a company of ladies sitting at a table near the window with countenances *fixed.* In an instant he was aware of their condition and broke the window. He saved them from incipient suffocation.'

P. 416, l. 572. *Resigned to* :—'given up to' ; a use of the Lake District, according to Prof. Knight (*Life*, I. (ix.) p. 311), commenting on a passage in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journals.*

P. 426, ll. 973, 974. The notion is very general that the cross on the back and shoulders of this animal has the origin here alluded to.—W.

Ll. 976-980. This and the previous stanza were omitted from ed. 1827, but restored in ed. 1832. In a note (1820) Wordsworth says that the line 'By an immeasurable stream' was suggested by Haydon's 'Picture of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem' ; in which picture Haydon introduced Wordsworth's portrait.—Prof. Knight.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

P. 431. Dedication to ——:—Possibly his wife, possibly his sister. We have no means of deciding the question. In the Fenwick note Wordsworth says that he was first fired to write sonnets in 1801, when,

one afternoon at Dove Cottage, his sister read to him the sonnets of Milton. Prof. Knight (*Eversley Wordsworth*, IV. 29) shows that in this, as in many other chronological details, Wordsworth's memory played him false. It was in 1802 that he was fired to write sonnets by hearing Milton's sonnets read, and he had written a certain number of sonnets long before, besides the 'irregular one,' which in the Fenwick note is the only one he remembers as written previously to 1801.

L. 14. 'Something less than joy, but more than dull content.'

Countess of Winchilsea.—W.

Published 1827 :—This dedication was probably written at the end of 1826 or beginning of 1827, as the edition of 1827 was sent to the printer in January of that year.

P. 431. PART I. I. *Published* 1807 :—Probably written not long before the *Poems in Two Volumes* were published, as a 'Prefatory Sonnet' to the collection of sonnets included in that edition. The *Poems in Two Volumes* were in the press in Nov. 1806. The last line but one reminds one of the *Ode to Duty*, which was written in 1805.

P. 433. IV. AT APPLETHWAITE, NEAR KESWICK, l. 14. This sonnet was first published in the vol. of 1842, where it immediately precedes the *Epistle to Sir G. Beaumont*. Cp. vol. II. p. 397. Sir George Beaumont, after staying at Greta Hall, the residence of Southey and Coleridge, near Keswick, in 1803, before he knew Wordsworth personally, bought for him a small property at Applethwaite, about three miles from Greta Hall, in order that he might be near Coleridge. The plan came to nothing, owing partly to Coleridge's unsettled life ; and soon after his daughter Dora's birth, Wordsworth settled the property on her.

P. 433. V., l. 5. Cp. Spenser, *Virgil's Gnat* (translation of the *Culex*), stanza iii.

> Or whereas Mount Parnasse, the Muses' brood,
> Doth his broad forehead like two horns divide,
> And the sweet waves of sounding Castaly
> With liquid foot doth slide down easily.

P. 433. VI., l. 1. This rill trickles down the hillside into Windermere, near Lowwood.—I. F.

P. 434, l. 10. *Faithful Emma :*—Dorothy Wordsworth.

Published 1820:—Written originally perhaps in 1801. Prof. Knight quotes from a MS. copy :

> For on that day, now seven years gone, when first
> Two glad foot-travellers, through sun and shower
> My Love and I came hither, etc.

This might refer either to the poet's walking tour with Dorothy in 1794 (cp. Prof. Knight's *Life*, I. (ix.) 88), or to their arrival to take up their abode at Grasmere in 1799.

P. 434. VIII., l. 14. Suggested at Hackett, which is on the craggy ridge that rises between the two Langdales, and looks towards Windermere.—I. F.

P. 435. XI., l. 2. A projecting point of Loughrigg, nearly in front of Rydal Mount. . . . Vulgarly called Holme-Scar.—I. F.

L. 4. 'With lingering farewell' till ed. 1837.

P. 438. XVII. To the Poet, John Dyer, l. 14. John Dyer, author of *Grongar Hill* (published 1726), *The Fleece* (1757) etc., was born at Aberglasney in Caermarthenshire, in, or shortly before, 1700, and died in 1758. The quotation in ll. 5, 6 above is from *The Fleece*, bk. III. ll. 437, 438. Wordsworth more than once expressed admiration for Dyer, as the only lover of natural scenery, except Thomson, among the poets of the eighteenth century. Cp. above, p. 438.

P. 439. XIX., l. 14. *Mantling*:—It is difficult to attach a *precise* meaning to the word 'mantling,' even after an examination of the materials collected for the *Oxford Dictionary*, which Mr. H. Bradley kindly placed at my disposal. The more or less unconscious associations which led to its use here were probably those (1) of its use to express the frothing of fermented liquors, and of metaphors drawn from this use, such as Pope, *Imitation of Horace's Satires*, II. ii. 8, 'And the brain dances to the mantling bowl,' and Goldsmith, *Deserted Village*, l. 248, 'To see the mantling bliss go round,' and Wordsworth himself, *The River Duddon*, xiii. 12, 'While the warm hearth exalts the mantling ale'; (2) of such a phrase as Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vii. 439:

> The swan with archèd neck
> Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
> Her state with oary feet,—

in which there seems to be a reference, not bearing strict analysis, to the use of the word in falconry (cp. the cancelled first stanza of *Dion*, above, p. 530). The sense in which a blush is said to mantle is nearly allied to the former of these uses, but carries a more direct reminiscence of the original meaning of the word, to cover as a mantle; as also does the phrase of Milton, *Comus*, l. 294, 'The mantling vine.' Cp. *An Evening Walk*, l. 231, where the word is probably suggested by Milton's swan, but is used in the sense of 'covering.' In Wordsworth's second poem *To the Celandine*, ll. 23, 24:

> With the proudest thou art there
> Mantling in the tiny square

(above, p. 259), there is a similar somewhat vague use of the word, in which the sense of spreading over a certain surface is combined with a notion of pride.

Published 1819:—Cp. the following sonnet, and the *Song for the Spinning Wheel* (above, p. 264), which was written for Sarah Hutchinson in 1812. Some cancelled lines of this sonnet, given by Prof. Knight from MS.,

very distinctly recall the *Song*, and suggest the inference that the two were written at no long interval. The lines in question are:

> And fancy prized the murmuring spinning-wheel
> In sympathies inexplicably fine,
> Instilled a confidence, how sweet to feel!
> That ever, in the night calm, when the sheep
> Upon their grassy beds lay couched in sleep,
> The quickening spindle drew a trustier line.

P. 439. XX. To S. H. :—Sarah Hutchinson, the poet's sister-in-law.

L. 7. *Who toils to spin our vital thread:*—Lachesis, one of the three Fates.

P. 440. XXIII. Composed on the Eve of the Marriage of a Friend in the Vale of Grasmere, 1812:—The poet's brother-in-law, Thomas Hutchinson, who married Mary Monkhouse.

P. 441. XXIV. From the Italian of Michael Angelo:—Translations from Michael Angelo done at the request of Mr. Duppa, whose acquaintance I made through Mr. Southey. Mr. Duppa was engaged in writing the life of Michael Angelo, and applied to Mr. Southey and myself to furnish some specimens of his poetic genius.—I. F. The first sonnet is a translation of Sonnet lx. (*Ben può talor col mio ardente desio*), the second of Sonnet lii. (*non vider gli occhi miei cosa mortale*), the third of lxxxix. (*Ben sarien dolce le preghiere mie*). These references are to *Le Rime di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, ed. from the autograph MSS. by Cesare Guasti (1863). Wordsworth's translations were made from the *rifacimento* of Michael Angelo's nephew, in Wordsworth's time the only known versions of these poems.

L. 14. The curiously irregular arrangement of the rhymes in this sonnet, which of course has no counterpart in the original, is best explained by Wordsworth's letter to Sir G. Beaumont (Prof. Knight, *Life*, ii. (x.) p. 67): 'I mentioned Michael Angelo's poetry some time ago; it is the most difficult to construe I ever met with, but just what you would expect from such a man, showing abundantly how conversant his soul was with great things. . . . I can translate, and have translated, two books of Ariosto, at the rate, nearly, of one hundred lines a day; but so much meaning has been put by Michael Angelo into so little room, and that meaning sometimes so excellent in itself, that I found the difficulty of translating him insurmountable. I attempted, at least, fifteen of the sonnets, but could not anywhere succeed.'

P. 442. XXVII., l. 3. *Thee:*—Catherine Wordsworth; see p. 117, *Characteristics of a Child*, etc. She died June 14, 1812.

P. 443. XXVIII. :—The latter part of this sonnet was a great favourite with my sister, S. H. When I saw her lying in death I could not resist the impulse to compose the sonnet that follows it.—I. F. This explains

the relation between these two sonnets, written many years apart, but numbered I. II., as closely connected. The Fenwick note is, however, obscure, as Sarah Hutchinson died on June 23, 1835, whereas the sonnet referred to is dated by Wordsworth Nov. 1836.

P. 444. XXX., l. 9. *Dear Child:*—Possibly Dorothy Wordsworth, who was with Wordsworth at Calais when this sonnet was written; but more probably a girl named Caroline, of whom nothing further is known than that she and 'Annette' used to walk with Wordsworth and his sister on the shore of an evening, and that her 'delight' at the spectacle of the boats going out of the harbour in the sunset is recorded in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal.*

P. 444. XXXII., ll. 5-8. From a passage in Skelton.—W. (1807). Cp. Skelton, *Bowge of Courte,* stanza 6:

> Methoughte I sawe a shyppe, goodly of sayle,
> Come saylynge forth into that hauen brood,
> Her takelynge ryche and of hye apparayle.

P. 445. XXXIII. There are two reminiscences of Spenser's *Colin Clout's come Home againe* in this sonnet. With l. 11 cp. l. 283 of that poem, 'A goodly pleasant lea'; with l. 14 cp. l. 245, 'Triton, blowing loud his wreathèd horn.' Cp. too *Paradise Lost,* iii. 603-604:

> . . . and call up unbound
> In various shapes old Proteus from the sea.

P. 445. XXXIV., l. 3. *'Coignes of vantage':—Macbeth,* I. vi. 7.
As published in 1823 ll. 4-9 were almost entirely different from the ultimate text. That text was first published in 1827, and remained unaltered in subsequent editions.

P. 446. XXXVI. To the Memory of Raisley Calvert:—See Introduction, p. xxxvii.

P. 447. Part II. III. To B. R. Haydon:—Benjamin Robert Haydon painted the well-known picture of Wordsworth on Helvellyn. He was born in 1786, and died by his own hand in 1846.

P. 447. IV., l. 3. *Gillies:*—Nephew of Lord Gillies, the Scotch judge, and also of the historian of Greece . . . cousin to Miss Margaret Gillies, who painted so many portraits with success in our house.—I. F. He was a writer of much versatility and talent, but generally in a hopeless condition of insolvency. He was a friend of Sir Walter Scott and other literary men, and he contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine,* especially translations from the German. His best known work was *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran* (3 vols., 1851). Cp. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

L. 5. *Bellerophon:*—The Corinthian hero, best known for his exploit, when, mounted on Pegasus, he slew the Chimæra. Wordsworth alludes to the story, first found in Pindar, but better known from the allusion

of Horace (*Odes*, IV. xi. 26), that on Bellerophon attempting to ride Pegasus up to heaven the winged steed threw him to earth by the will of Zeus.

P. 448, l. 12. *Roslin's faded grove*:—The village of Roslin is about six miles from Edinburgh, close to Hawthornden.

P. 449. VII., l. 11. Cp. especially *Phædo*, 84 E, foll. and 108 D, foll.

P. 449. VIII. RETIREMENT, l. 6:—The text of this curiously ungrammatical sonnet was never altered. 'Her' refers apparently to the mind or the soul; this being gathered from the expressions, 'the whole weight of what we think and feel,' and 'thought and feeling.' The last three lines of the sonnet are also, to say the least, awkwardly expressed; but one may safely say that Wordsworth had in his mind Milton's 'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

P. 450. X. l. 2. *Yon cold grey Stone*:—This stone is still visible in the grounds of Lancrigg, at the foot of Helm Crag. It was on a terrace on the hillside hard by that Wordsworth composed a great portion of *The Prelude* and many other verses.

P. 450. XI. COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMBLETON HILLS, YORKSHIRE:—Among other alterations made from time to time in this sonnet the following is of special interest. Ll. 5-12 originally stood:

> The western sky did recompense us well
> With Grecian Temple, Minaret, and Bower;
> And, in one part, a Minster with its Tower
> Substantially distinct; a place for Bell
> Or clock to toll from. Many a glorious pile
> Did we behold, sight that might well repay
> All disappointment! And, as such, the eye
> Delighted in them.

The great improvement in ll. 9-12 is obvious. Ll. 5-8 were perhaps altered partly to avoid the doubt whether 'Grecian' should qualify all the three following substantives or not, partly because the expression 'and Bower' seemed weak. The result of the change was to produce one of the abnormal forms of the octave (the same as in *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, Part III., Sonnet xlvi.), which Wordsworth freely admitted.

October 4, 1802:—Wordsworth says in the Fenwick note that this sonnet was written on his wedding day. The language of a great part of it corresponds so closely with Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* that editors think that Wordsworth is, as so often, forgetful of the true date, and wrote the sonnet later, according to his frequent practice, with the *Journal* before him. It seems possible, however, that the language common to both sonnet and *Journal* may represent the conversation which the scene actually evoked at the time. Cp. the opening of the following sonnet.

P. 451. XIII. SEPTEMBER, 1815, l. 9. *For me, who under kindlier laws*:—

This conclusion has more than once, to my great regret, excited painfully sad feelings in the hearts of young persons fond of poetry and poetic composition, by contrast of their feeble and declining health with that state of robust constitution which prompted me to rejoice in a season of frost and snow as more favourable to the Muses than summer itself.—I. F.

P. 452. XVII. To the Lady Mary Lowther. *With a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea; and extracts of similar character from other writers; transcribed by a female friend:*—The selection here referred to came to light in 1905 while the present edition of Wordsworth was going through the press. It has since been edited for the Clarendon Press by Prof. Littledale. The 'female friend' who transcribed the extracts was Sarah Hutchinson. A note in the handwriting of the Lady Mary Lowther (afterwards Bentinck) settles the date of this sonnet, which was prefixed to the volume of selections and signed by Wordsworth in autograph.

P. 453. XVIII. To Lady Beaumont:—From Oct. 1806 to Aug. 1807 the Wordsworths occupied a farmhouse close to Coleorton Hall, lent them by Sir George Beaumont. They busied themselves much in laying out the winter garden of the Hall, which was being enlarged at the time. Landscape-gardening was a hobby of Wordsworth, in which he was proficient, and his correspondence with Sir George Beaumont and others contains much criticism on the subject.

P. 453. XIX. l. 2. *Which only Poets know:*—Cowper, *The Task*, II. 285.

P. 454. XXI., l. 11. *Emathian:—I.e.* Macedonian. In the following line the reference is to the Sacred Band of three hundred Thebans which formed the flower of the army of Thebes, and was said to have been undefeated until it was annihilated at the battle with Philip of Macedon at Chæronea in 338 B.C.

Published 1820:—According to Wordsworth, composed a few days after Sonnet XVI. above, *To a Snowdrop*. Probably it was not finished in time for publication in 1819; or Wordsworth may not have become reconciled to its artificiality at once.

P. 455. XXIII., ll. 1, 2. Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella*, XXXI.

Perhaps 1802:—This poem was first published as a poem of fifteen lines in the *Poems in Two Volumes* of 1807, as one, with *Beggars*, *To a Skylark*, *Alice Fell*, and *Resolution and Independence*, of *Poems composed during a Tour, chiefly on Foot*. Three of these were certainly, and the *Skylark* was perhaps, written in 1802, in the February of which year also appeared in the *Morning Post* (besides the verses beginning 'Dear Child of Nature, let them rail,' and 'Calm is all Nature as a resting wheel') an anonymous poem, like this one, of fifteen lines, and, like this one, addressed to the moon: see *Written in a Grotto*, vol. III. p. 424. Mr.

Hutchinson, therefore, reasonably supposes that this poem and the anonymous one were both experiments in a new metrical form 'made at the period (1802), when, after an interval of ten years, the poet resumed his essays in sonnet-form.'—*Poems in Two Volumes*, ed. 1897, vol. I. p. 187. This poem was reduced to a sonnet in ed. 1820.

P. 455. XXIV., l. 3. *Sullenly*:—In all the collective edd. from 1827 onwards the word is misprinted 'suddenly.' In the original ed. (1815), in ed. 1820, and in the vol. of *Sonnets* (1838), the text is correct. A close parallel from Wordsworth's letter to *The Friend* in reply to *Mathetes*, written in 1810 (pointed out by Rev. W. A. Harrison in Prof. Knight's ed.) suggests that this sonnet was written about the same date.

P. 457. XXVIII. St. Catherine of Ledbury. *Published* 1835:—Written on a journey from Brinsop Court, Herefordshire.—I. F. Prof. Knight (*Life*, III. (xi.) p. 254) thinks that Wordsworth spent some time at Brinsop Court with his relatives the Hutchinsons in the autumn of 1835, and refers this sonnet and Part III. Nos. XV. and XX. to this visit. They were, however, all published in 1835, in the vol. *Yarrow Revisited and other Poems*, which is evidently referred to as already published in a letter of Aubrey de Vere of Sept. 10 of that year (quoted by Prof. Knight on the page referred to above).

P. 457. XXIX. Motto:—*Midsummer's Night's Dream*, v. i. 16.

Ll. 9-14. Both these superstitions are prevalent in the midland counties of England: that of 'Gabriel's Hounds' appears to be very general over Europe; being the same as the one upon which the German poet, Bürger, has founded his ballad of the *Wild Huntsman*—W.

P. 458. XXX., l. 10. The Fenwick note informs us that this sonnet was suggested by the first view of the Lake country on the road between Preston and Lancaster.

P. 458. XXXI. *Published* 1815:—Dated by Mr. Hutchinson 1806; according to Prof. Dowden, 'date uncertain.' Prof. Knight dates it doubtfully 1806, apparently because of its similarity to the sonnet 'There is a little unpretending Rill' (above, Part I. No. VI.), which he dates 1806.

P. 458. XXXII. Composed on the banks of a rocky stream, l. 1. *Dogmatic Teachers, of the snow-white fur*:—The reminiscence of Milton is obvious: *Comus*, l. 708, 'To those budge doctors of the Stoick Fur.'

P. 460. XXXVI. Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802:—The real date was July 31, 1802. Wordsworth tells us in the Fenwick note that the sonnet was 'written on the roof of a coach, on my way to France,' and he and Dorothy left London on July 31. Reference is made to the scene in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*.

P. 460. XXXVII. Conclusion. To —— :—There is no evidence with regard to the person addressed.

L. 3. Cp. *Poems dedicated to National Independence and Liberty*, vol. II. p. 40.

P. 462. Part III. III. Oxford, May 30, 1820, l. 10. *I.e.*, if fancy is to transport me, as in the preceding sonnet, to the life of an undergraduate at Oxford, it must perform even greater wonders, and enable me to imagine another person young again and taking part in this dream of a youth different to that which she and I really experienced. The other person is either Wordsworth's wife or his sister; they were both with him at Oxford on this occasion. The contrast which is here drawn between the man's roving fancy and the woman's fidelity to past experience will have come under the observation of many readers.

P. 462. IV. Recollection of the portrait of King Henry the Eighth, Trinity Lodge, Cambridge. *Published* 1827 :—Probably written after Wordsworth's visit to Cambridge in May 1824, the ed. of 1827 being the next ed. after that date.

P. 462. V. On the death of his Majesty (George the Third) :—George III. died Jan. 29, 1820.

P. 463. VI. June 1820. Cp. the reference to Thomson at Richmond in *Remembrance of Collins*, above, p. 12.

P. 463. VII. A Parsonage in Oxfordshire :—Cp. *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, Part III. Sonnet xviii. The Parsonage (of Souldern, between Bicester and Banbury) was occupied by Wordsworth's friend Robert Jones. See above, p. 12.

P. 464. VIII. Composed among the ruins of a Castle in North Wales. Probably 1824 :—Wordsworth visited Carnarvon Castle in Sept. 1824.

P. 464. IX. To the Lady E. B. and the Hon. Miss P. :—The celebrated pair of friends, Lady Eleanor Butler and the Hon. Miss Ponsonby, who lived together at Plass Newidd.

P. 465. X. To the Torrent at the Devil's Bridge, North Wales, 1824, l. 4. *Pindus* :—The principal mountain chain of Northern Greece. At the date of this sonnet the Greek War of Independence, which began in 1821, was still in a critical condition, and remained so until the battle of Navarino in 1827.

L. 7. *That young Stream* :—The Rhine. Cp. *Descriptive Sketches*, l. 162, above, p. 17.

P. 465. XII., l. 1. Philoctetes, to whom the dying Heracles had

bequeathed his bow and arrows, was left on Lemnos, while the Greeks attacked Troy, on account of his foot being sorely wounded.

P. 466. XIII., l. 1. *Anna:*—Miss Jewsbury, to whom, as Mrs. Fletcher, the poem called *Liberty* (vol. II., p. 406) was addressed.

P. 467. XV. To ——:—Miss Loveday Walker, daughter of the Rector of Brinsop in Herefordshire.—Prof. Knight. I am not able to trace the source of the quotation at the head of this sonnet. The lines may possibly be Wordsworth's own.

P. 467. XVI. The Infant M—— M——:—Mary Monkhouse, the only daughter of my friend and cousin Thomas Monkhouse.—I. F.

P. 468. XVII. To ——, in her seventieth year:—Lady Fitzgerald, as described to me by Lady Beaumont.—I. F.

P. 468. XVIII. To Rotha Q——:—Rotha Quillinan, grand-daughter of the poet.

P. 470. XXIII. Filial Piety:—Dated Feb. 5, 1828 in Edith Southey's Album.—Prof. Dowden. The fact celebrated by Wordsworth has been placed on record by Mr. James Bromley, whose wife's grandfather was the 'son' of the sonnet. 'The tradition handed down in the family is this. One Thomas Scarisbrick was killed by a flash of lightning whilst building his turf-stack in 1779. His son James Scarisbrick, who was then thirty years old, completed the stack, and ever after during his life reverently kept it in repair as a memorial of his father. James died in 1824, consequently for forty-five years he had tended this rude monument, and to further perpetuate the remembrance of it he left to his grandchildren sets of goblets and decanters, on each of which are incised his own and his wife's monogram and a representation of the turf-stack between two trees.' The farm was about a mile from Ormskirk, on the way to Preston.—*The Athenæum*, May 17, 1890.

P. 471. XXIV. To the Author's Portrait:—The last six lines of this sonnet are not written for poetical effect, but as a matter of fact, which, in more than one instance, could not escape my notice in the servants of the house.—I. F.

Probably 1832:—The date of the portrait.

P. 471. XXV., ll. 11-14. In the month of January, when Dora and I were walking from Town-End, Grasmere, across the vale, snow being on the ground, she espied, in the thick though leafless hedge, a bird's nest half-filled with snow. Out of this comfortless appearance arose this sonnet, which was, in fact, written without the least reference to any individual object, but merely to prove to myself that I could, if I thought fit, write in a strain that poets have been fond of.—I. F.

Published 1835:—Composed 1832 or 1833.—Mr. Hutchinson.

P. 472. XXVII. l. 1. *A Poet :*—There is no reference to any particular person in this sonnet; it is an outburst of protest against a certain sort of critical writing of Wordsworth's day, and, in particular, as Wordsworth told Miss Fenwick, a use of the word 'artistical.'

P. 473. XXX. Composed on a May Morning, 1838 :—Prof. Knight (Eversley ed. vol. viii. p. 97) prints a very large number of 'tentative efforts in the construction of this sonnet,' as well as of the sonnet beginning, 'If with old love of you, dear Hills!' (vol. ii., p. 138), and *A Plea for Authors* (No. xxxviii. of this series), all of which were written in May 1838.

P. 474. XXXII. To a Painter:—Miss M. Gillies. She painted miniature portraits of Wordsworth and his wife. Cp. last note but one on p. 539.

P. 475. XXXVI. l. 10. *Both :—I.e.* both she and the children. Mr. Hutchinson would read 'both do live and move,' thinking 'to' an uncorrected printer's error. No doubt the sense becomes clearer, but it is possible to supply 'are privileged' from the preceding line.

L. 14. This sonnet refers to Mrs. Southey.—From I. F.

P. 476. XXXVIII. A Plea for Authors, May 1838 :—About this time Wordsworth was very much interested in the question of copyright, corresponding with many leading men on the subject, and himself presenting a petition to Parliament, which is given in Prof. Knight's *Life*, vol. iii. (xi.) p. 320.

P. 477. XL. To the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, D.D., Master of Harrow School:—Author of the *Memoirs of Wordsworth*, and afterwards Bishop of Lincoln.

P. 480. XLVII. At Furness Abbey, l. 14. *Cavendish :*—Furness Abbey is the property of the Duke of Devonshire, whose family name is Cavendish.—Prof. Knight.

Probably 1845:—The date attached by Wordsworth to the following sonnet was probably meant to refer also to this one.

ADDENDA

(1) At the very last moment before publication, Mr. Hutchinson has placed me under a fresh obligation, by pointing out to me the following sonnet, signed W. W., in the *Morning Post* for February 13, 1798. I was at first strongly inclined to reject it, on obvious grounds of style; and no one, I imagine, would be sorry to learn that it was not written by the 'real' W. W. But Mr. Hutchinson has convinced me that it would be rash to deny the probability of its authenticity in the face of the circumstantial evidence. If it be Wordsworth's it must belong to earlier years than 1798. It recalls his earliest attempts at sonnet-writing, and the inclination which he avowed towards voluptuous love-poetry: the language has considerable resemblance to that of *Descriptive Sketches* (original version), ll. 94-101, 148-157 (*see* vol. iii. pp. 465-6). In 1798 Coleridge had just lately begun to contribute to the *Morning Post*, and he and Wordsworth wanted whatever money they could get for their proposed visit to Germany. As Mr. Hutchinson points out, Coleridge was content to send any rubbish he could lay hands on, of his own or his friends, for Stuart to publish in the *Morning Post*: he may even have sent this sonnet without Wordsworth's knowledge. On the whole, there is enough evidence to make it necessary to reprint the sonnet as probably one of Wordsworth's *Juvenilia*. Not quite the same can be said of the poem *The Old Man of the Alps* which appeared in the *Morning Post* about three weeks later (March 8, 1798) over the signature *Nicias Erythraeus*. This signature, borrowed from *Tristram Shandy* (chap. clxiii. *ad. fin.*, note), was employed by Coleridge for his own poem *Lewti*, published in the *Morning Post*, April 13, 1798. Presumably, therefore, Coleridge claimed the authorship of *The Old Man of the Alps*, which is included in the Pickering-Macmillan edition of his poems (4 vols. 1877-1880), but was omitted by Dykes Campbell from his edition (Macmillan, 1893). But as Mr. Hutchinson, to whom I owe all these facts, very truly says, 'it really smacks strongly of Wordsworth'; it reads in fact like an 'overflow' from the *Descriptive Sketches*. Either it is work of Wordsworth's slightly rehandled by Coleridge, or perhaps, more probably, it is simply imitation of Wordsworth by Coleridge.

SONNET

If grief dismiss me not to them that rest
'Till age, thou lovely maid! those starry fires
Unwatch'd extinguish, and the young desires
Forget those vermil lips, that rising breast,

And those bright locks, that on thy shoulders play
At will; and from thy forehead time displace
The vernal garland, with'ring ev'ry grace
Which bids concealment on my spirit prey;

Haply my bolder tongue may then reveal
The prison annals of a life of tears!
And if the chill time on the softer joys
Smile not, a broken heart perchance may feel
Sad solace from the unforbidden sighs,
Heav'd for the fruitless lapse of vernal years.

W. W.

Morning Post, Feb. 13, 1798.

(2) The following lines were written by Wordsworth on the fly-leaf of a volume of his poems presented by him to Miss Letitia Taylor, daughter of Colonel Taylor, of Leamington. They were first published in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, vol. ix. p. 572.

Not loth to thank each moment for its boon
Of pure delight, come whencesoe'er it may,
Peace let us seek, to steadfast things attune
Calm expectations, leaving, to the gay
And volatile, their love of transient bowers
The House that cannot pass away be ours.

Wm. Wordsworth.

Leamington,
All Saints' Day, 1844.

(3) Since my preface was printed, Professor Knight has brought out *Letters of the Wordsworth Family* (Ginn and Co., 3 vols.), which comprise some hitherto unpublished letters of Wordsworth.

CORRIGENDA

Vol. i. p. lxxi, note, last line: for 'ix.' read 'xi.'
Vol. ii. p. 530, note to p. 370, l. 23 for 'expect' read 'suspect.'

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